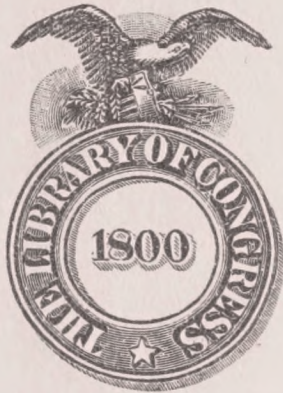


HERBERT BROWN



WHITAKER



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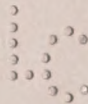
Herbert Brown

A Thrilling Religious and
Moral Story

By

O. B. WHITAKER

Author of "Poor Dick and Winning Willie," "Lectures
and Poems," etc.

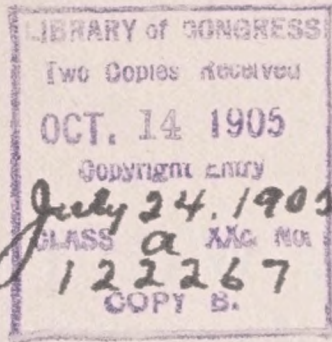


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Lincoln, Kansas



*TO THE CAUSE OF TRUTH
AND THE BETTERING OF MY
FELLOWMEN THIS VOLUME
IS DEDICATED BY*

THE AUTHOR

Herbert Brown

A THRILLING RELIGIOUS AND MORAL STORY

CHAPTER I.

AN EVENING AT SANDPRE.

"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things."
—Rom. 10:15.

The rays of the setting sun, blushing red with love and warmth and sympathy, leapt across the far-stretching level western prairies, and kist good-night the beautiful town of Sandpre, at the close of a Sabbath autumn "Indian-summer" day. Herds of cattle scattered here and there over the unbroken sward were peacefully cropping the rich close-curved Buffalo grass, or following the beaten peaceful paths toward the corrals or resting places. Ranch houses with their accompanying stables and sheds dotted the horizon at intervals, and gave to the otherwise

wild and desolate scene a homelike appearance. A group of cow-boys came galloping into town, and the lowering sun sent their shadows, glimmering and ghostlike, gliding over the level landscape. The western heavens were lighted up with a golden glory as the sun sank slowly below the horizon; and yet there was a touch of melancholy, if not a coloring of sadness, to the beautiful picture. At least, so it seemed to the eyes of a young man and a young woman standing one on either side of the closed gate at the residence of Mr. Winnow, gazing with intelligent, thoughtful faces toward the setting sun.

"Herbert, you know how father and mother think in this matter; and I know that should I join the—the—your church, they should never feel right about it."

"Yes, I know, Theora," answered the other slowly and thoughtfully, "but"—and looking into the face beside him, he saw the great deep blue eyes filling with tears, and added quickly, "O well, we'll talk that over some other time. Shall I call for you at half past seven?"

"Yes, Herbert; good-bye."

"Good-bye."

As Herbert Brown walked away, he looked even more manly than usual. He stood near-

ly six feet in height, and tho rather slender was yet well proportioned and strongly and gracefully built—strong, neatly carved limbs, well shapt head beautifully poised upon full square shoulders, a face indicating intelligence, strong character and a sympathetic nature, and a full high forehead well set off by the raven locks upon it.

“After all,” he mused aloud to himself, “may be I ought not to have mentioned it to her. I most wish I hadn’t.”

Herbert Brown entered the door of his father’s neat cottage, tossed his hat carelessly upon the bed and turned his face to the window looking out upon the street. He stood with his hands thrust into his pockets, a puzzled expression of sadness, or regret, playing upon his handsome features. The vision of that face, with its lovely pure eyes filling with tears persisted in lingering before him. It was the first time he had ever seen tears in those eyes, tho the couple had been acquainted for nearly five years—since the time when her parents had moved to Sandpre from the eastern part of the state. Their courtship had extended over the last three years, and they had been engaged for nearly a year.

Theora Winnow was the daughter of a well-

to-do ranchman, who had taken up his headquarters at Sandpre some five years before. She was the belle of the town. She was accomplished, yet combined with it a native shyness and modesty that no culture or training could give. Tho she had spent much of her life on the frontier, her education had not been neglected. She could catch, bridle, saddle and mount her horse alone; and had gallopt many a time unattended over the rolling prairies, or at the side of her father. She had even learned to throw the lasso and to shoot the revolver. But, contrary to the usual tendency or inclination of environments like these, such a life had not developt in her that coarseness, or masculinity, so often developt by such experiences and attainments; but she had retained that exquisite, undefinable femininity so highly prized by man, and that should be more highly prized by her own sex. Tho Herbert Brown had never taken upon himself to analyze those rare qualities that distinguished her, yet he recognized them as a whole, and more than all that he had read in those deep, rich eyes a fullness of love that was more precious to him than life itself and all the world combined. For the first time a serious difficulty had arisen between them, which was the more annoying because of its

stubborn obstinacy. The more he thought about it the more unsolvable it seemed and the more undecided he became. He was awakened from his deep reverie by the opening of the dining-room door behind him, and a voice—

“Come, Herbert; we’ve already eaten our supper; and yours, I’m afraid, is about cold. Shall I fry you an egg?”

“O no, I don’t care for any. Really, I’m not much hungry anyway,” he replied, as he seated himself at the table.

“Are you going to church tonight?”

The speaker was a lady about fifty years of age, somewhat gray, slightly more than medium height, a face that indicated more than ordinary intelligence and marked character. The resemblance in features pointed her out at once as the mother of the young man. But before he could answer there was a rap at the door.

“Why, good evening, Mrs. Trego. Come in,” said Mrs. Brown, opening the door.

“Good evening, Mrs. Brown. Good evening, Herbert.”

“Good evening, Mrs. Trego,” said the young man, bowing.

“O my!” exclaimed Mrs. Trego, heaving a deep sigh, “I’m almost out of breath. I’ve just been over to see Jake Adams again. I

tell you it's just simply a shame the way that poor fellow's been treated. He's just been nagged and nagged, until he doesn't know what to do. He told me this evening that he didn't know whether he'd join any church or not."

"How does Mrs. Adams feel about it, Mrs. Trego?" askt Mrs. Brown.

"Why, she told me after Jake had gone out that she would gladly go with him to any church he wanted to join. You see they don't understand anything about the differences among the different churches. You know she was a member of the Lutheran church before she came here, and as she did not find that church here she did not unite with any. Poor Sarah! I pity her, for she seems to feel so bad about Jake. She cried while she was talking to me. She says she believes he is losing his religion. I tell you, it's too bad! Really, it's too bad!"

"Yes, indeed it is too bad," answered Mrs. Brown. "That poor woman has had such a hard time of it anyway all her life, at least since her husband was killed. She has had to work so hard to make a living for herself and Jake, and she has tried so hard to keep him right. She seems to worship that boy. I never could understand how she bore up at

all, as he grew worse and worse, until he had gotten to be nothing but a drunken, swearing, gambling, fighting wretch. Many a time she has washt all day, and then at night gone up town and helpt bring him home, when he was so drunk he couldn't walk alone, and then sat up all night and watched him."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Trego, "I think Jake Adams was certainly the lowest, vilest, most helpless character in town when that meeting began. There was certainly not a good thing in him. Everybody had lost all hopes of him, unless it was his poor tired mother."

"And what a surprise his conversion was! How happy poor Sarah was that night. You remember how she shouted and clapt her hands until she was so weak she could not stand any longer. And really it was no wonder, for had the dead actually been brought back to life it could not have meant more to her."

"O yes, I remember it all," said Mrs. Trego, "and I believe that the conversion of Jake Adams had more to do with the success of that meeting than did anything else. You remember there had been only one conversion before that, and there were fifteen the very next night, and over one hundred the next week. Everybody could see that Jake's

conversion was genuine, and that had more influence than any sermon could have."

Let us break in upon this conversation for a moment to explain to the reader the events that had recently transpired in the town, and that had led up to the subject of conversation.

A few weeks before a "union" meeting had been arranged for by the four churches of the town—the Presbyterian, the Methodist, the Baptist, and the United Brethren. There was also a Catholic church in the town, but it took no part in the meeting. A large tent was rented, and an evangelist, Rev. Greedor, a man of considerable reputation in that field of work, was secured to conduct the meeting. The different churches had for the past several years attempted separate revivals without much success for any of them, and as this plan had succeeded admirably in other places from which they had heard they had decided to try it here. The first week of the meeting was almost without apparent results, when one night, to the surprise of all, Jake Adams, the most hopeless character in the town, came forward, led by his mother, a frail little washer-woman, a widow, to ask for prayers. The news of his conversion spread like wildfire throughout the town and the community, and

many, even those who had never before attended church, came thru curiosity not more to see Jake Adams and to hear him testify in church than to see and hear the man whose miraculous power could convert such a character. The next evening quite a number followed the example of Jake, and at the end of the week the meeting closed in the midst of great enthusiasm, with nearly one hundred converts reported. So good was the feeling that when the local pastors, carefully instructed by the evangelist, called for voluntary contributions for the minister who had labored so faithfully among them for the past two weeks a purse of nearly four hundred dollars was made up for him, and that night the amount was increased to over five hundred.

A little card was filled out for each convert, on which was written his "church preference," and the cards were then handed to the respective pastors. In case no church preference was given, the card was markt "undecided," and the representatives of any or all the churches might call upon such an one. As Jake had never given much attention to religious matters he had no church preference; in fact, he was too much interested in his own salvation to consider that matter at all; and so his card was markt "undecided." As a re-

sult he and his mother were promptly visited by representatives of each of the churches, and later by other representatives, and by the pastors, also.

"I think, Mrs. Trego, you are mistaken," said Herbert, who up to this time had been a silent listener to the conversation between the two women, "when you say that there was nothing good about Jake before his conversion. While he was a hard drinker and often drunken, and swore and gambled a good deal, and was in a good many brawls and fights, yet he had the reputation of keeping his word, except when he was drunk, and he never went back on a friend."

"I think you are right, Herbert. There was so much bad about him that I really had forgotten the good. But, by the way, Herbert, why don't you go and talk with him?" asked Mrs. Trego.

"Talk with him about what, Mrs. Trego?"

"About joining the church."

"What church?"

"Why, Herbert, how you talk! What church do you belong to?"

"To the Presbyterian, I suppose."

"Why don't you go and ask Jake to join the Presbyterian church? I believe you could have an influence with him. It would just be

a shame for the Methodists to get them. They are doing their very best, too, and trying every means, fair and unfair. The little his mother has attended worship since she has been here has been at the Presbyterian church, and two-thirds of her washings now are from Presbyterian families, and we are entitled to them. Why won't you go and talk with them about it, Herbert?"

"What would I say to him?"

"Why, just ask him to join your church."

"But really I don't care whether he joins the Presbyterian church or some other."

"Herbert, Herbert," spoke his mother, "you are certainly a little out of humor this evening. You realize that we should stand up for our own church, and use our influence to build it up and strengthen it for future usefulness. I know you do not mean all you are saying, Herbert."

"Well, probably not quite all I have said, mother; but I tell you I believe this fighting among the churches over the converts of this meeting is going to drive poor Jake Adams and probably many others of the converts back to the world; and besides that I am sure it is destroying the enthusiasm and spirituality of the others. I'm sure I do not feel just as I did."

"Yes, Herbert," replied his mother, "but because others use misrepresentation and other unfair means is no reason we should abandon the field."

"But, mother"—and just then the clock struck, and turning, Herbert saw that the hands pointed to half past seven, and springing quickly to his feet, said—

"You'll have to excuse me, please. I have an engagement," and snatching his hat from the bed, he hurried out of the house.

CHAPTER II.

OLD TIM GRIGGS' THEOLOGY.

"But judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."—Rom. 14:13.

"Waal, reely, Parson, I don' give a d—n fer yer religin, er yer churches, an' all thet; but it does seem ter me thet you fellers in the churches does a lot o' thin's thet us ol' tuffs wouldn't do."

The speaker was a man of low, heavy build, powerful frame, his long hair, reaching to the shoulders, decidedly gray, the face covered with a rough grizzly beard, the eyes, tho blurred by age, yet sharp, and, when animated, almost fierce, a decidedly weatherbeaten countenance, and a nose and mouth—in fact, the entire physiognomy—that indicated boldness, fearlessness, decision, strong character—the typical frontiersman. Nor does his appearance belie the character of the man before us, for "Old Tim Griggs" was one of the earliest settlers in this country, and was well known as a buffalo hunter, an Indian fighter, a man

without fear, and the most daring of those dare-devil characters that roamed the western plains in the dangerous days of the sixties and the seventies. He would resist an insult as readily as a blow, and yet he would at any time discommode himself in order to accommodate a friend. No bully ever cowed him, and no one in need ever called upon him in vain. His name carried terror into the Indian camp, and his presence was a guaranty of safety in the settler's home. His face had been a welcome vision on many a dangerous occasion. Now, that those days of peril and excitement were past, he sat for hours, and recounted with the greatest pleasure thrilling experiences of frontier life. Aside from this, he was a man of but few words; but he had the habit of saying what he pleased, when he pleased and where he pleased. In spite of his rough, uncouth exterior, every old settler had a warm spot in his heart for "Uncle Tim."

The occasion of the conversation of which the above is a part was a meeting of two or three members of the Presbyterian church and their pastor, the Rev. Mr. Collins, in the general store of I. C. Brown, the father of Herbert Brown. Each of the churches had accused each of the others of unfairness in their zeal for securing the converts of the re-

cent meeting, and the fight had waxed quite warm, especially between the Methodist and the Presbyterian churches. In fact, it had become the principal matter of conversation in the town.

"I agree with you, Mr. Griggs," said the minister, turning rather indifferently toward the shabby looking old man that had ventured the above comment on their conversation, "I agree with you that a great many things have been done and said that have brought a reproach upon the cause of Christ; and no one regrets it more than I; but the fact that some in the churches act thus ought not to be an occasion for one to condemn the church, religion and Christ."

"I didn't say a word 'bout Christ. I said I didn't give a d—n fer yer church er yer religion, an' I tell ye I don't. I don' know nothin' 'bout Christ 'at I'd fin' fault with; but I want ter tell ye right here ef any mortal man 'ud say 'bout me w'at I heerd ye say 'bout the Meth'dis' preecher jes' now, er half wa't I heerd 'im say 'bout ye in Whalin's hardware store jes' yisterdy, he'd haf ter answer fer it. I never talk thet way 'bout no man 'less I mean bis'ness, an' ef any man talks thet way 'bout me, I'll make bis'ness fer 'im," replied the old man, his

eyes sparkling somewhat, as they turned full upon the minister.

"I regret very much, Mr. Griggs, that such an occasion is afforded the outside world to criticise, and I assure you that were not the provocation too great to pass without notice, I should by no means engage in such criticism of a brother minister," replied the pastor, with a shade of timidity.

"Brother minister? D'ye call 'im brother minister?"

"Why, certainly."

"D'ye think a feller can be a Meth'dis' an' be a Christin?"

"I'm sure he can."

"An' can a Baptis' be a Christin?"

"Most assuredly."

"An' a Cam'lite?"

"Why, yes, I grant all that."

"Then w'at's the use o' all these churches?"

"The function of the church is to bring salvation to a lost and perishing world, and to look after the spiritual welfare of its members."

"Waal, I don' know nuthin' 'bout thet—don' know w'at ye mean by them words—mebby they're all right. But w'at I want ter ask ye is, w'at's the use o' so many churches in a little place like this? I heerd the feller 'at

wus preachin' at the tent say 'at Christ founded the church. Did 'e foun' all o' 'em?"

"Well, no; Christ founded but one church," replied the minister, thoughtfully.

"War'd the res' uv 'em come frum, then?"

"The divisions in the Christian church have arisen from the erroneous attempts of man to define the Holy Scriptures," replied the minister, with more boldness.

"I don' understan' thet; but do ye mean thet all but one uv 'em is wrong, an' thet the Presbyterian church is thet one?"

"Well, no; er—er—that is, I should say that I believe the Presbyterian church comes nearer the truth than does any of the others."

"Then ye think it is partly wrong, too, do ye?"

"Well, no; to tell the truth, I believe its doctrines are all in perfect harmony with the Scriptures."

"Did the feller 'at preached at the tent b'long to the Presbyterian church?"

"You mean Rev. Greedor, the evangelist?"

"Waal, I don' know w'at ye call 'im."

"I do not know to what church he belonged. As a rule these evangelists do not make known their church affiliations, as that would undoubtedly prejudice those of other denomina-

tions, and thus curtail much of their usefulness."

"He didn't seem ter be so back'ard 'bout mentionin' the c'lection."

"And yet there is certainly nothing to criticise in that," said the minister, "for 'The laborer is worthy of his hire.'"

"Waal, yes; I reckon so; but it looks ter me like purty big hire. How much was made up fer 'im?"

"The collection amounted to something over five hundred dollars, but it must be remembered that it was all voluntary contribution."

"How long was he here?"

"About two weeks."

"Thet's about a thousand dollars a month, ain't it?"

"Well, yes; but when we remember the wonderful blessing brought to this town through that meeting—more than one hundred souls saved—such an amount becomes very insignificant."

"I b'lieve thet feller'd a tuk two thousand ef it'd a ben offered 'im, don't ye?"

"If it had been a voluntary contribution, I suppose he would, and it would have been all right for him to have done it."

"Waal, mebbly it would ha' ben all right. I

don' perten' ter know nuthin' 'bout sech things. But it don' look thet way ter me."

"And yet," added the minister, wishing to end the conversation with a little good humored joke, "and yet, if we didn't want to lose the money, we should be a little careful about offering it to Mr. Griggs," and he ventured a little laugh, as he lookt around at his parishioners.

"Look 'e here, Mister," and the old man raised his right hand and pointed a grimy forefinger straight into the face of the minister, who lookt timid and somewhat abasht before the riveted gaze of the gleaming eyes, "Old Tim kin laugh at a joke in its place ez well's any one, but this ain't no place fer a joke. W'en Old Tim tells ye he won't take money he ain't airnt, he won't, an' thet's the end uv it. He don' hol' hisself up ez no model to nobody. He does a good many thin's 'at yer church wouldn't 'prove uv, an' he don' say they're right, nuther. He takes his dram an' he swars when he pleases, tho he don' do nuther often; an', ol's he is, his right han'll still pertec' his word an' his honer; an' w'en ye hint 'at Ol' Tim'll take money he ain't hon-es'ly airnt, I want ter tell ye, my frien', ye're treadin' on dang'rus groun'. Listen! Fer I'm goin' ter tell ye sumthin', an' it's only one

uv a good many sech exper'ences. It wus way back in the sixties. It wa'n't 'Ol' Tim' then, fer 'e wus young an' quick an' strong, both o' eye an' limb. The settlemint wus back 'bout fifty miles east o' here. I wus lef' ter look arter thin's w'ile the res' o' the men went on a buf'lo hunt. Waal, one night a band o' devilish Injuns sneakt up frum the river an' murdered the wife an' two growed up daughters o' Pat Rouin, an' stole his little five-yar-ol' gal. The nex' mornin' w'en I went arly to thar home, I foun' the woman an' the two gals layin' on the floor dead' an' thar scalps gone, an' the little one missin', fer I knowed ev'ry fam'ly then in sixty miles o' thar an' jest who b'longed to it. I rode back ter the settlemint whar the wimmin war, an' tol' them w'at had happened an' showed 'em how ter pertec' themselves—the wimmin in them times knowed how ter use guns—an' I started on the trail uv them Injuns. I follered 'em four days 'fore I got a chance ter git the chil'. D'ye see thet scar thar?" and he turned the side of his face, and pointed to a long deep scar down across the right cheek. "Waal, I got thet thar. Yes, sir; Tim Griggs jes' dasht right into the midst o' thet ban' o' painted devils, an' caught thet little scairt gal right up onto his hoss, an' hel' her an' the reins in his lef'

han' an' fought them Injuns back with his right. Yes, sir; a Injun done thet with his hatchet," pointing to the scar, "an' ef he'd a ben a inch closter no white man ever'd a knowed wat become o' Tim Griggs. But I want ter tell ye 'at the answer Tim Griggs giv thet Injun never lef' no scar, fer it never healed. I want ter tell ye right now, Mister, it wus a desp'rite fight, but I rode the bes' hoss they wus on them plains in them days, an' he jes' seemed ter know somehow w'at wus up, an' I want ter tell ye when Tim Griggs' shootin' irons commenced ter speak, an' them Red-skins commenced ter bite the dust, they begun ter take the hint an' ter fall back. W'en I got out o' thet fight I hed three arrows a stickin' in my flesh, an' my hoss hed seven. An', sir—would ye b'lieve it?—thet little gal jes' turned right roun' facin' me as soon's ever thet fight begun, an' put 'er arms tight roun' me an' hel' on jes' like she knowed the very thin' ter do, an' she never got a single scratch. Say, Mister, I've thought a good many times that thar's a Higher Power thet helps a feller at times like thet. Waal, w'en I reacht the settlemint the men 'ad jes' got back, an' war arrangin' ter set out ter hunt fur me. An' poor Pat Rouin, he war jes' a takin' on turrible, a cryin' an' a hollerin', an'

they couldn't none o' 'em do nuthin' with 'im. But I want ye ter understan' right here he wus a man, ev'ry inch o' 'im. But I tell ye, it war a turrible blow ter 'im. An' w'en he seed me a comin' a carryin' his little gal, thet pore feller come a runnin' jes' like a wil' man, an' w'en I handed the little gal down ter 'im, he jes' hugged 'er an' kist 'er, an' then would hol' 'er off at arms length an' look at 'er the queer-es', an' then he'd hug her an' kiss 'er agin. I know he kist 'er a hundred times, an' then he jes' put 'is arms roun' me an' kist me, an' he jes' took on thet way until I couldn' help breakin' down an' cryin' myself. An' now, Mister, I come ter the part I want ter tell ye, an' Ike thar," pointing toward the proprietor of the store, "kin tell ye the same, fur 'is father wus one o' thet comp'ny. Waal, w'at I wus goin' ter tell ye is, the nex' mornin' they'd made up a purse fur me uv one hundred dollars, an' Frank Brown—thet's Ike's father, an' Herbert's gran-father—he persented it ter me. He says, sez 'e, 'Tim, here's a little purse we've made up fur ye. It ain't much, but we kinder wanted ter let ye know 'at we liked 'at sort o' doin's. We've made it up amongst us,' he sez, 'an' ev'ry one on us has give sumthin', an' we want ye ter take it,' he sez. Waal, Mister, I can't tell ye jes' how I felt, but I

tried ter tell 'im thet I couldn't take it, an' I seemed ter kinder choke, or sumthin', an' I couldn't speak, an' so I jes' pusht it back an' shook my head. Mebby it'd a bin all right to a tuk it, but I couldn't a done it. No, sir, not fur a thousan' dollers Tim Griggs wouldn't a techt it. An' then purty soon here come Pat, an' he sez ter me, he sez, 'Tim,' he sez, 'since my wife an' the two gals is gone, it seems 'at the little gal's all I've got in the worl' 'at I keer anythin' fur. I wouldn't take all the worl' fur 'er, an' I'd a gin everythin' I hed a thousan' times fur 'er ef I could. Ye don' know how much comp'ny she is fur me, Tim,' he sez, 'an' at night w'en I git ter thinkin' an' a cryin', thet little thin' jes' rolls right over agin me, an' puts 'er little arms aroun' me, an' ye don' know how kin' o' comfortin' it is, an' it seems ter kin' o' make my heart stop achin', an' I can kinder forgit an' go off ter sleep. She's worth more'n the worl' ter me, Tim, an' I'd give ye ev'ry thin' I've got, Tim, ef ye'd take it, but I know ye wouldn't do thet; but I'm goin' ter divide up with ye, Tim,' he sez, 'cause ye hain't got nuthin' only yer hoss an' saddle an' yer guns, an' now thar ain't none o' us only jes' me an' the little un, an' I don' need no more'n ye do. Ye kin 'ave half the cattle an' half the hosses, an' ye kin 'ave

the east eighty, an I'll keep the west eighty 'at's got the house on, fur the little gal'll need a home, an' ye'll allus have a place ter stop with us. An' now, Tim,' he sez, sez 'e, 'I don' want ye ter say no, fur seein' w'at ye've done fur me, it's a mighty little thin' I'm a doin' in return.' An' I sez, 'No, Pat, I'm jes' as much obleeged ez kin be,' I sez, 'but Tim Griggs don' want nuthin' fur doin' jes' his dooty.' Mebby it'd a bin all right to a tuk it, but I want ter tell ye right here, Mister, 'at ef I'd a wanted sech truck ever so bad, I couldn't a tuk it thar frum Pat Rouin, an' ef I hed a tuk it I'd a ben ashamed ter a slept in the same bed wi' myself arterwards. Course I kin see lots o' difference 'tween me an' the feller 'at preacht at the tent. I know it takes a lot o' qualerferkashum, or whatever ye call it, ter preach an' hol' meetin's like thet, an' ez thet wus his bis'ness it'd a bin all right fur 'im ter a tuk fifty er seventy-five dollers fur his two week's work; but w'en it comes ter takin' all a feller kin git jes' 'cause the people 'r kinder feelin' good an' willin' ter give—waal, it may be all right, but it don' look thet way ter me. No, sir, Mister, Ol' Tim's ben tried, an' ye don' need ter be a feered ter leave no money a layin' roun' 'at he ain't hones'ly airnt, fur 'e

ain't a goin' ter tech it. Tim Griggs don' want nuthin' he ain't hones'ly airnt."

Just then the curfew began to strike seven, the time agreed upon among the merchants of Sandpre to close their places of business, and the tap-tap of Uncle Tim's cane was heard, as he led the way to the door.

CHAPTER III.

LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS.

"It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones."—Lu. 17:2.

The scene to which we now introduce the reader is a familiar one, for it is the residence of Mr. Brown. It was early Monday morning. A month had passed since the close of the meeting at the tent, but quite a number of the converts had not yet united with any church, and the efforts of the different denominations to secure their membership had become more and more spirited, each goaded on by the consciousness that a rival church was doing its best to secure them. The contentions had in a few instances become even bitter, and there had been a number of animated discussions, chief among them, one that had taken place between the pastors of the Methodist and the Presbyterian churches, a short time before the events recorded in the previous chapter. It occurred on the street, where they chanced to meet and engage in a

controversy, in which each accused the other and the other's church of unfair means in proselyting. Quite a number had collected before the controversy ended, and it ended in a very abrupt and unbrotherly manner.

"The clothes are not quite ready, Mrs. Adams," said Mrs. Brown, in response to a knock at her kitchen door; "but the girl will have them ready presently. Come in, and rest awhile. We overslept a little this morning. We had a business meeting last night after church, and did not get home until late. I notice you haven't been to church the last two Sundays."

"No."

The speaker was a slender, frail looking, tho, in fact, wiry, little woman, about forty-five years old, thinly and very plainly clad, the slightly bent form indicating the toiler. Deep lines of care marked what was once undoubtedly a face of more than ordinary beauty, and sorrow had left the print of his heavy hand upon the countenance—a countenance that at a glance was a guaranty of purity of character and honesty and uprightness of heart. Eighteen years ago, in her native town in Kentucky, her husband, who was by trade a blacksmith, had been killed in a drunken brawl; and she was left a widow with

one child about four years of age, and with no property or means of support except the little shop. Following the advice of a friend, she had sold the shop and come west, and with the small amount she had left when she arrived here had built the little three-room house in which she and Jake had lived ever since.

Mrs. Adams was one of that rare class of human beings that seems entirely to forget self in their interest for others; and since the death of her husband the only object of her life seemed to be her only child, and her only measure of sorrow or happiness was his happiness or suffering. Tho she worked hard and constantly, she was never known to complain of being tired or weary, and if she were too ill at any time to work her only regret seemed to be that she was not able to administer to his wants.

"No," she said, in reply to Mrs. Brown's remark, "I couldn't get Jake to go, and of course I wouldn't go without him," and her lip trembled slightly, as she spoke. "The first Sunday we missed he stayed at home with me all day, but yesterday he went up town in the afternoon, and I was so 'fraid"—she stopt suddenly, and turned her face toward the window to hide the tears she felt coming.

"I fear Jake is making a great mistake," replied Mrs. Brown, "in not coming into the church. You would both feel so much better and so much more at home in the church, and Jake would be so much safer there where the church could look after him. I understand you are ready to come with him?"

"O yes, I am ready to go with him to any church. Mrs. Brown, I am afraid—Jake—is losing—his religion—that he is going back," and a thin calloused hand covered the eyes, and a sob shook the slender form.

"I wish you and Jake would come into the Presbyterian church," said Mrs. Brown, her voice and face showing the deep sympathy she felt for the little woman before her. "I am sure you would feel at home there. What excuse does Jake offer?"

"You know we did talk of that at first, and I think if no one had talkt to Jake everything would have been all right; but so many have talkt to him, trying to get him to join first one church and then another, that it seems he has kind of turned against them all. They have said so much against all the churches that Jake says he won't join any."

"Did any one say anything against the Presbyterian church?"

"O yes, I think more than any other."

"Who?" askt Mrs. Brown, her eyes sparkling, for her church was next in her affections to her family.

"Well, I think Rev. Merlin, the Methodist minister, said the most."

"And what did he say against the Presbyterian church?"

"O, he said a good many things. I don't remember them all; but he said it wasn't as spiritual as the Methodist, and that it held unscriptural doctrines."

"And did he say what unscriptural doctrines it taught?"

"Yes, he said the Presbyterian church taught that God created the most of the people with the intention of sending them to eternal torment, and that all who were lost were lost just because God willed it, and not because of any fault of theirs, and no difference how much they tried or repented they couldn't be saved; and he said that it taught that the most of the children that died in their infancy were lost."

"Why didn't you ask our pastor about that? He could have made it all clear, I am sure."

"We did; or rather, Jake did; for the very next day Mr. Collins called on us, and when he mentioned our joining the church Jake told him what the Methodist minister had said."

"And didn't Brother Collins make it clear to you and Jake?" askt Mrs. Brown, with deep interest.

"Well, he said it was a mistake about the Presbyterian church not being as spiritual as the Methodist, or any other church; that some people mistook excitement or enthusiasm for spirituality; but that no church had more real spirituality than had the Presbyterian."

"All of which I am sure is true, Mrs. Adams; and did he explain the other, too?"

"Well, probably he did; but Jake couldn't understand it, and I didn't either very well. He said that the Bible taught very clearly the doctrine of God's eternal decree, sometimes called election or predestination; and that to deny it was to deny the Bible. Jake askt him if the Bible taught that God created most people just to send them to hell, and he said the Bible taught that the majority of mankind would be lost. Jake askt him if it taught that the children that died would go to hell; and he said it would be foolish to think that only the elect children died, and the bad ones lived. And Jake said to him, 'Does the Presbyterian church teach that, and that God takes pleasure in such as that?' and he said, 'To deny this is to deny the Holy Scriptures and the power of God,' or something like that. 'But,' he said,

'these are not things for you to consider now. This is one of the deepest mysteries of godliness. After awhile, when you have studied the Scriptures carefully and considered these things thoroughly, you will find this no objectionable doctrine, but one of the most glorious and beautiful in the Scriptures.' Jake didn't say anything more to him, but after he had gone he said he wouldn't join no church that taught such as that; and then he askt me if the Bible taught that, and I had to tell him I didn't know, and he said he wisht he had askt the preacher to show him that in the Bible, and he said if the Bible taught that he didn't want anything to do with such a book, for he didn't believe it. You don't know how bad I felt, for I wanted Jake to join the church so bad, and I just didn't know what to do or what to say. He don't talk religion any more and don't seem to take no interest in such things, and he spends so much of his time like he used to up town. I'm so 'fraid some one will get him to go back into one of those terrible 'joints,' and I know if he does, he just can't resist the temptation, for you know he likely inherited his appetite. O, how I wish there were no such places to tempt him!"

"Yes, I wish so, too," replied Mrs. Brown, unwilling to abandon the previous subject, but

unable to think of anything to say that would leave it in better light than her pastor had left it.

"May be the crusade they started last Saturday will accomplish something."

"What crusade?"

"Why, you know that Rev. Merlin and some of the women of the Methodist church went to each of the saloons last Saturday and held a short prayer and song service? I do hope they will keep it up until something is accomplished. How I wish there were no 'joints' or saloons!"

"Yes, I do, too," replied Mrs. Brown, "but I don't think they will accomplish anything."

"Why?" asked Mrs. Adams, in surprise.

"Because I think it is just simply a move on the part of the Methodists to make it appear they are the only 'temperance' church in town. If they really wanted to do anything else, why didn't they make up a union crusade from temperance people in all the churches?"

"But couldn't the others join in yet and help?" asked Mrs. Adams, in the deepest earnestness.

"That is just what they want. That would leave the impression that the Methodist is the leading church, and if anything should be accomplished they would get all the honor

for having started it. That's just what they want, and you may be sure the other churches are not going to do much while they lead."

"O, I see," said Mrs. Adams, with a regretful expression, "I had not thought of it in that light before. But I do wish something could be done."

There was a knock at the door, and Mrs. Brown opened it to find there a young man about twenty-two years of age, clad in working clothes. He was of medium height, rather fleshy, the face and eyes plainly indicating the hard drinker and debauchery, and yet withal a good-natured expression upon the countenance.

"Will you come in, Jake?" asked Mrs. Brown, for it was no other than Jake Adams, with whom the reader is already somewhat acquainted, and whose life is to form an important part of this narrative.

"O, no, thanks; I just wanted to speak to ma."

At the sound of the familiar voice Mrs. Adams sprang quickly to her feet and stepped excitedly to the door.

"What is it, Jake?"

"O, nuthin', only I just wanted to tell you I won't be home for dinner. Mr. Winnow wants

me to go to the ranch to help brand cattle."

"You'll be home for supper, will you?"

"Yes, but it may be purty late," he replied, as he started for the gate.

Just then Herbert Brown came out of the parlor, where he had been reading until time to go to the store, and he bowed and spoke to Mrs. Adams as he past through the dining room. Jake had just closed the gate as Herbert stept out, and seeing him coming, he unlatcht the gate he had just latcht.

"Hello, Jake," said Herbert.

"Hello, Herbert," replied the other, for they had been acquainted since they were children.

"Going up town?"

"No, I'm going over to Winnow's. We're going out to the ranch to brand cattle today."

The two walkt in silence for nearly a block. It was one of those embarrassing silences that so often occur when both minds are considering the same thing, and each is conscious of the subject of thought of the other. It was the first time the two had fallen into each other's company since the close of the meeting, where they were converted. The one is hoping the matter will not be mentioned, and is trying to think of something to lead off conversation,

while the other feels it his duty to mention the subject, and that it will be cowardly not to do it before their ways part. While he did not consider it his duty to go and see Jake about the matter, yet somehow now that he was thrown into his company he felt that he would be guilty should he let the opportunity pass without speaking, and he was casting in his mind how to introduce the subject. At last he said, boldly—

“Jake, aren’t you going to join the church?”

“Well, I did intend to join the church, Herbert,” replied the other slowly and rather reluctantly, “but I’ve about changed my mind. The churches ain’t what I thought they were.”

“Don’t you think it would be easier for you to live right in the church, Jake,” askt Herbert, after they had again walkt some distance in silence.

“Well, I’ll tell you, Herbert. Your church teaches things I don’t believe. Some say they’re in the Bible, and some say they ain’t. Of course, I don’t know, for I never read the Bible before that meeting, and I hain’t read it much since. But if they’re in the Bible, then I don’t believe the Bible. It wasn’t no such preaching as that that converted me—if I was converted—and if they’d preached such stuff as that I’m sure I wouldn’t have believed it.

Of course I don't know much about such things, but I tell you, Herbert, it would be impossible for me to believe such stuff, or to love a God like that; and I'm not a going to join a church where I have to pretend to believe something I don't believe."

Herbert was surprised, if not startled, at the speech of his companion, and he could hardly realize that it was indeed Jake Adams that was talking to him. Nor did he fully understand what his companion had said.

"You misunderstand me, Jake. I did not mean the Presbyterian church. I had no particular church in mind at all. I united with the Presbyterian church because my folks belonged to it. I really do not know very much about it, and did not think much about it. No, Jake, I don't care whether you join the Presbyterian church or some other. You join the church you want to."

"Herbert, you don't know how much good it does me to hear you talk that way," said Jake, with unmistakable emotion. "I expect there has been twenty-five different ones talking to me about joining the church since I was converted—yes, there must have been twice that many—and you are the first one that I honestly believe cared one cent for anything except to get me into their own church; and,

Herbert, if you was in any church except the Presbyterian, and I ever joined any church, I believe I would go in with you."

"Why do you dislike the Presbyterian church so much, Jake?"

"Well, when I come to think about it, I may be mistaken after all. The fact is, when the people from the different churches came to see us and found we were thinking of joining the Presbyterian church, they of course tried to turn us from it so we would join theirs. May be if I had said some other church I would have heard as much against it. You see, Mr. Jackson, the deacon of the Baptist church, told us that the Presbyterian church didn't baptize, but just sprinkled water on the converts, and that the Bible commanded baptism, and that sprinkling wasn't baptism, and he read a lot of scripture to us that did seem that way; and he said that baptism was a commandment, and that no one could be a Christian that didn't keep the commandments of God. And then the Methodist minister told us that the Presbyterian church was not spiritual, and that the Methodist was the most spiritual of all churches; but I didn't pay much attention to that, for I hadn't never noticed much difference among the churches here in that way. And then he told us that God made

most of the people, and even little children that died while they were little, just to send them to hell, and that he took pleasure in that sort of doings; and I askt the Presbyterian minister the next day about it, and he just about the same as acknowledged it. That was the worst thing I heard about the Presbyterian church. I tell you, Herbert, if God does such things, I don't see no use of trying to be good or do right. I don't see no use of trying to stop keeping company with the fellows I've been running with. They're a tough lot, and into all kinds of meanness, but I don't believe there's one of them that's mean enough to do such things as them."

Again was Herbert startled by the remarks of his companion. He was made quickly conscious that Jake was not his disciple, but his teacher. Tho Herbert Brown had often heard these doctrines mentioned, and had a sort of general idea of what they meant, yet he had never given them a serious thought, and had really never thought of considering whether they were in harmony with the teachings of the Bible or not.

"Jake, the principle upon which you are acting is certainly right. No one ought ever join a church or any other organization whose principles or doctrines he does not believe and

indorse. I must confess that I have never thought much about these things. I don't know much about the church I have joined except that my folks belong to it. But I cannot help believing, Jake, that you have been misinformed, or that you do not clearly understand these things. At least, I hope so," said Herbert, as they reached the place where their ways parted.

CHAPTER IV.

UNDECIDED.

"In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."—Mat. 15:9.

"Well, Theora, where shall we go to church this evening?" askt Herbert Brown.

"O, we'll go to your church this evening, Herbert."

Theora Winnow was sitting at the piano in her father's parlor, where she had just finisht playing an accompaniment to a song they were singing. He was standing at her side, his elbow resting on the piano, looking down into the upturned face. He probably did not hear the answer at all; for all unconsciously Theora had assumed a most graceful and attractive position. Herbert thought, as he lookt at her, that she was even more beautiful than she had ever seemed before. He was feasting his eyes upon the pretty face looking up at him, the full, red, ripe, slightly parted lips, the large, deep blue eyes, mellow with love, the ivory brow. She blusht slightly un-

der the riveted enraptured gaze of her lover; and rising said:

"Come, Herbert, you don't have to stand up, we have chairs. Take that one," and placing her hand on his arm she indicated by a little push the upholstered arm-chair she wisht him to occupy. He somewhat reluctantly obeyed, and she seated herself in another opposite.

Just then he remembered the question he had askt, and dimly remembered that she had answered, but for the life of him he could not remember a word of her answer.

"What did you say, Theora?" he askt.

"Say about what, Herbert."

"Why, about where we should attend church this evening."

"Why, Herbert, how important you must have considered my answer to have forgotten it so soon!" she said, laughing.

"Really, Theora, I did not hear a word you said. I was thinking of you," he said, smiling with an expression on his face of intermingled teasing and adoration. "What did you say?"

"I said we'd go to your church," she answered, her cheek coloring under the compliment paid her.

"What are we going to do about this church business finally, Theora? You remember this

is the day we had set for settling it, do you?"

"Yes, I remember."

"Do you think you can talk about it now without crying," asked Herbert, joking.

"Yes, I guess so," replied the other, smiling, "but we must not talk too loud, Herbert, for mamma you know is just in the other room reading."

"Oh! Thanks," said Herbert, laughing, and moving his chair over closer to Theora.

"O, you stupid fellow," said Theora, laughing a hearty, merry laugh.

"Well, now, Theora, what do you think about it?" he said, becoming serious. "You know we said we should settle it today once for all, and never bother over it again. And if we do that we should settle it in such a way that neither of us will regret it later."

"If it were not for papa and mamma, Herbert, it would be easy for me to dispose of this matter; for I should leave it entirely to you; and I think I shall anyway. Since the odds are even on both sides, I think it only fair that you should decide it."

"No, no, Theora, that would not do. I should rather leave things as they are, and yet judging from observation I do not just like the prospect," he said, smiling. "You know Jim Dawson and Mattie Leach belonged to

different churches when they were married, and they parted within less than two years, and gossip says that was at the bottom of their troubles. And then the Marquis family——”

Yes, they both remembered all about the Marquis family. The mother belonged to the Baptist and the father to the Methodist church. Each attended his or her own church services. Three of their children had been converted at the recent meeting, and after some delay two had joined the Baptist church with their mother; and the other had not yet joined any—she, the eldest daughter, generally went with her father to the Methodist church, and it was now generally understood that she would unite with that church. The discussions, and even quarrels, that had taken place in this family, especially since the meeting, when each parent was desirous of leading the children aright according to his or her best judgment, were no secret; and so we are betraying no trust in mentioning them here. Theora remembered too that just yesterday she had heard her father say that he should not be surprised if they would separate; and he thought it would be better if they should. They had never got along very well; but since

the meeting their domestic troubles had become more public.

"O Herbert, I know we wouldn't do that way," said Theora, placing her hand upon his arm, and looking almost pleadingly into his face.

Herbert Brown leaned back in his chair and **laught** a hearty, ringing laugh; it was almost cruel, tho not intentional, for he had only heard the words, and their pretty innocent earnestness had amused him. He had not read the pleading expression that had accompanied them; and his merriment ended as suddenly as it began, as he lookt into the face still turned toward him, with an expression half smiling, half pleading, and colored slightly with a blush, provokt by the unexpected burst of merriment.

"May be after awhile we'll be glad for so good an excuse to get away from each other's company for an occasional spell anyway," he said, with that same cruel mischievous expression on his face.

"No, Herbert, it shall not be that way. I will go with you to the church of your choice."

"No, Theora," he answered, seriously and thoughtfully, "that would not be fair. You have the same right in this matter that I have. It would not be right, even if you should con-

sent, for me to decide such a question for you."

"O yes, it would be right, Herbert," she said, with a decisiveness in her tone that attracted his greater attention.

"How do you know it, Theora?"

"Why, Herbert," she said, her face lighting up with the expression of one who has made some pleasant discovery or unraveled some difficult puzzle, "you know that what at first troubled me most was the question of what I ought to do—whether I should endeavor to please mamma and papa or you in this matter."

"Yes, I guessed that was the question," said Herbert, looking at her with a decidedly interested, inquisitive, half-playful expression; for he knew from her attitude that she thought she had made an important discovery, and though he did not think she had any magic solution for the aggravating problem before them, yet he was deeply curious to know what she had to say.

"Well," she continued, "I have found the answer to that question."

"You have?" he asked, still more curious.

"Yes, Herbert, I have," she replied. "You see the other night I was reading the Bible; and I don't know how it happened, but I was

thinking of that very thing, and all at once I read the very answer to my question, and when I read it it just seemed to me that some one had spoken right out and answered the question. I markt the place, Herbert, and I'll show it to you," she said, rising and going to the center-table for her Bible.

Herbert Brown was indeed puzzled. He knew she was not joking, for this was too serious a matter with her. Neither could it be fancy, for he knew too well her sound judgment and sterling qualities. He had never dreamed of going to the Bible for an answer to the puzzling question; nor did he at all believe that she had found one; and he watcht her every movement with an expression like that of one watching for the curtain to rise at some celebrated play.

"Here it is, Herbert," she said, opening the book where she had the mark, at the fifth chapter of Ephesians. She had markt the 22d, the 23d and the 24th verses. She handed him the open Bible, pointing to the markt verses. He read them carefully, a smile playing about his mouth.

"But how about the next verse, Theora? Do you think that a man who really loves his wife would require her to 'submit' to his own

opinion in a matter in which she is as competent to decide correctly as he?"

"It says 'in everything', Herbert."

"Well, I guess it didn't mean that a woman was to join the Presbyterian or the Methodist church just because her husband happened to belong there."

"Why not, Herbert?"

"One reason is, that there was no Methodist or Presbyterian church then."

"There wasn't?" asked Theora, with a look of surprise.

"Why, no," answered Herbert, "and not for hundreds of years afterward—I don't know just how long."

"What churches were there then?"

"I don't know that there were any churches—I think there was just a church."

"What church was it, Herbert?"

"I don't know, Theora, any more about that than you do. I never read church history. But I know that there are no such names in the Bible as those that the different churches have now; and I know that everything in the Bible sounds like there was only one church."

"Why, of course that's true, Herbert; but I had never thought of it before. But do you suppose they all—the Methodists and Presby-

terians and Baptists—all belonged to one church?"

"I don't suppose there were any Methodists or Presbyterians or Baptists then."

"Well, no; I reckon not; but what I mean is, do you suppose that those who held these different ideas and beliefs were all in one church then?"

"I don't know whether they held such ideas and beliefs then; but if they did they must have been in the one church, if they were in any."

"What do you suppose was their Discipline, or Articles of Religion? Was it Methodist or Presbyterian, or what?"

"I don't know; but it wasn't any of them."

"How do you know it, Herbert?"

"Because they were made a long time afterward."

"Does any one know what the articles of religion of the first church were?"

"Well, I don't know, Theora, but I think it was just the Bible."

"Why wouldn't that be all right now," asked Theora, with deep interest.

"I don't know, Theora; you question me like you thought I was a theologian. I don't know any more about these things than you do, and may be not so much; but I have made

up my mind to know more about them. I was walking down the street the other day with Jake Adams, and I find he has been investigating along these lines more than I have. He told me some things about my own church that I did not know, and hope are not true. This thing of joining churches just because you happen to like the preacher, or the people that belong to it, or because it is the most popular, or because your folks happen to belong to it, or any other such reason, is, I think, all wrong; and yet I believe that is the way a great many do, and may be most of them. I blame the churches and the pastors largely for it, too. They have no right to ask people to join any church, without making clear its teachings and doctrines."

"But how are you going to find out what church is right, Herbert?"

"Well, I am now reading the Constitution of my own church. I confess that is a good deal like signing a note, and then looking to see what it is afterward; but really I never thought much about this matter until my talk with Jake."

"What church is Jake going to join?"

"He says he isn't going to join any."

"Why?" askt Theora.

"He doesn't believe their doctrines."

"O well, but he could live a Christian life in the church anyway. I know a great many do. He doesn't have to pay any attention to that."

"No, Theora; that is wrong. That would be like a liquor sympathizer or dealer joining a temperance society, or a horse thief joining a law and order league, or an infidel preaching the gospel. When one joins a church he says by that act that he believes and accepts the creed of that church; and if he doesn't believe it, he ought not to join the church. And then, anyway, what could be the use of the creeds of the churches, if their members do not believe them?"

"I had never thought of it that way before, Herbert; but I think you are right—I know you are right. But, Herbert, what if you find that you do not believe your church's doctrines?"

"I shall withdraw from it. What else could I do and be honest? I wish I had never joined the church until I had investigated, and known what I was doing."

"But what if you should not find any church whose doctrines you believe, Herbert?"

"Well," he answered slowly and thoughtfully, "I had hardly thought of that, but I

realize that such a thing could be possible. In that case I think I should not unite with any. I believe one can live a Christian outside of any church, tho I realize it would be much better and easier in it."

"You said you were reading your church Discipline, Herbert. Have you found anything in it yet that you don't believe?"

"You mean the Constitution, Theora—that's its proper name. Well, I can hardly answer your question yet. I don't intend to deny anything until I have informed myself as fully as possible; but I have markt several things in it to look up, and I am going to ask our pastor to explain them to me. Have you read any in your Constitution?"

"Ours isn't called a Constitution; it's a Discipline. Yes, last Sunday evening after you had gone I read some in it."

"How do you find it?"

"O, I don't know. Part of it is clear enough, and a part of it I don't understand."

"Where is it?"

"Just in the other room. Shall I get it?"

"Yes, get it; and let's see how it compares with the Presbyterian."

Theora brought the Methodist Discipline and handed it to him, unopened.

"Oh! Is that it?" he said, as he opened the

little book. "It isn't half as large as ours." After a moment's silent reading he added, "The first chapter reads just about like ours. I believe it is the very same thing," he continued, scanning it more closely. "Now, Theora, let me see whether you are a Methodist," he said, smiling mischievously; and he read from the book:

"'There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom and goodness; the maker and preserver of all things, visible and invisible.'

"That's to the first period. Do you believe that?"

"Yes, I think so. I believe there is only one God, and I believe He is eternal, and I do not think He has a body, for He is a Spirit. I do not know whether He has parts or not," she said thoughtfully, "and I think He is infinite and that He created all things. I think the Bible teaches all that, and I believe it."

"So do I," responded Herbert. "Now let me read to the next period:

"'And in unity of this Godhead, there are three persons, of one substance, power and eternity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.'

"Do you believe that?"

"I don't know what that means, Herbert. When I read it alone last Sunday evening, I wisht there were some one here to explain it

to me. It seems to me that word 'Godhead' is in the Bible, isn't it? But I don't know what it means."

"Yes, I hunted it up in our concordance," he answered, "and found it in the old version three times, and in the revised version only twice, and one of them was translated in the margin something else. But I don't know what it means, either."

"I never thought of calling God and the Holy Ghost 'persons,'" said Theora, "but I suppose they are; and I can't understand how the Father and the Son are of one eternity. Doesn't that mean the same age?"

"I don't know anything about it; in fact, it all sounds odd to me and unlike the Bible, but I know so little about the Bible that I am going to withhold judgment until I have a chance to learn. I never had the least idea that God and Christ were the same in either power or eternity until I read it in our Constitution, and as to their substance I don't remember ever reading anything about that in the Bible, and I couldn't find it in the concordance."

"O Herbert," suddenly broke in Theora, looking out the window toward the gate, "there is Rev. Merlin, our pastor, and he's coming in. Let's ask him about these things."

"All right," said Herbert, glad of the opportunity.

"Come, let's go into the front room and meet him," and she led the way.

The minister shook hands with all, they exchanged greetings and were seated. Rev. Merlin was a very large man, weighing over two hundred pounds, quite portly, and looked like one that had a good appetite, and enjoyed life and good health. He was well dressed, and spoke with the manner of conscious authority. Theora took advantage of the first lull in the conversation between the minister and her mother to break in with:

"Brother Merlin, we have some questions we want to ask you."

"All right; out with them."

"Well, it isn't exactly questions either, Brother Merlin; it's explanation we want. We don't understand this Discipline, and we want you to explain it to us."

"That's a part of my business, and I assure you one of the most pleasant parts, too," he said, glancing at Herbert, who he knew belonged to another church. "What is it you want light on, my dears?"

"The last part of this first paragraph," said Theora, handing him the Discipline.

The minister glanced over the clause in question.

"Why, yes; that's the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, one of the grandest, most beautiful and most important in Holy Writ."

"What does 'Godhead' mean, Brother Merlin?"

"Why, that is only another term for Trinity, and it means the unity of the three divine persons,—the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost."

"That's what we don't understand. Why are they called 'persons'?"

"The principal reason is because they *are* persons," answered the minister, with conscious wit. "The Scripture teaches this very clearly."

"Does the Bible say that they are persons, Brother Merlin?"

"I do not remember that it says it in just so many words, but it represents each of them as possessing the attributes of persons, which is the same thing."

"Then it says they are of one—one—I forget just how it reads."

"'Of one substance, power and eternity,'" added the minister.

"Yes, that is it. What does that mean?"

"Why, that means that they are all three

equal in substance, in power and in eternity,—God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost.”

“Is that in the Bible, Brother Merlin? Are you quoting from the Bible?”

“O no, I am quoting from the old form of the creed; but it is just as true as the Bible, for it is taken from it.”

“Is Christ God,” askt Theora, leaning forward with interest.

“He is the ‘very and eternal God.’ ”

“But doesn’t He talk to God and pray to him, Brother Merlin?”

“Why, certainly.”

“Well,” said Theora, looking puzzled, “is that a different God?”

“Why, no, my dear; there is but one God,” he replied, with a little laugh.

“Then was God crucified?” she askt after a moment’s thoughtful silence.

“God the Son was crucified,” answered the minister readily.

“Well, Brother Merlin, was there any God that was not crucified?”

“God the Father and God the Holy Ghost were not crucified.”

“Then are there *three* Gods, Brother Merlin,” she askt, still more puzzled.

“O no, there is but one God. These three

persons are one God, the Holy Trinity, my dear," he answered, with the slightest hint at impatience in his voice.

"I don't understand it at all," said Theora, with a childish look of impatience on her face.

"You must not expect to understand all the deep things of God at a glance, my dear. Did you get all the sciences that way when you went to school? Did they not seem dark to you sometimes, and afterward, when you had studied them more carefully, become clear? It is written: 'Great is the mystery of godliness,' and this is one of its greatest mysteries, and you must not expect to accomplish in a few minutes what it has required time for the most learned to do."

During this entire conversation Herbert had watcht the minister closely, and followed his answers carefully; and now that the conversation had stopt, he said:

"Rev. Merlin, the word 'Trinity' does not occur in the Bible at all, does it?"

"The *word* does not, but the *doctrine* does," replied the minister, with a little emphasis.

"I understood you to say that the word 'Trinity' means the same as Godhead?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then why not use it instead, since it is found in the Bible, and the other is not?"

"Because 'Trinity' is a more significant and a better term."

"If these creeds are all taken from the Bible and are so plainly taught in the Bible, as you say, and the Bible is inspired (as I have been taught to believe), and these books"—pointing to the little book in the minister's hand—"are only the works of men, I do not understand why we need them at all."

"They are absolutely necessary, young man, to the unity and soundness of doctrine of the church. They are our safeguard against heresy and imposition. And I would inform you that your own church has a longer creed than has the Methodist, and this doctrine of the Trinity is a part of it," replied the minister, a little sharply.

"I am very well aware of that, Rev. Merlin," answered the young man, coloring slightly, but in no other way indicating feeling, "and I assure you that I am not trying to defend the doctrines of my church or in any way to question those of any other church. I am simply asking for information. If, as you say, these things are all *clearly* taught in the Bible, it seems to me that ought to be sufficient; and if they are but dimly taught there, then it seems to me that all ought to have the right

to their opinions, or to the results of their own investigations."

"When you have made a more thorough study of the Scriptures you will better understand the necessity for these things. A church built after the plan you suggest would be full of schism, contention and heresy."

"I do not understand how these creeds are safeguards against heresy, etc., when the different churches have different creeds, and often contradictory ones; unless we are to understand that there is some particular church that has no heresy or contention in it, and that all the members of the others are heretics."

"One error is no excuse for others," answered the minister, shortly; "and you will better understand this when you are better acquainted with the teachings of the Bible and the mission of the church."

"Brother Merlin," broke in Theora, "do all the churches hold the doctrine of the Trinity?"

"Yes; that is, all the *orthodox* churches."

"What are orthodox churches," asked Herbert.

"Orthodox means sound in doctrine," re-

plied the minister, and glancing at the clock, he rose quickly, saying:

“Well, well, you will have to excuse me. I have stayed over my time already,” and bidding them good evening he walkt hurriedly away.

CHAPTER V.

AN EARLY MORNING VISIT.

"The ways of Zion do mourn. . . . All her gates are desolate: her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness."—Lam. 1:4.

It was the next morning after the events related in the last chapter, and the Winnow family had had breakfast a little earlier than usual, as Mr. Winnow would drive to his ranch to oversee some work being done there. The meal had been eaten in almost total silence. The evening before, after they had returned from church, and Theora had gone to her room, Mr. and Mrs. Winnow had sat for a long time, engaged in conversation started from a discussion of their pastor's visit and the events that had taken place in connection with it. Theora was their only child; that is, the only one living; and they were justly very proud and very fond of her. They had buried three children in the cemetery near their old home in the eastern part of the state; two having died in infancy, one, a bright boy, having died of diphtheria at the age of eight.

Mr. Winnow had gone to the barn for his team. Mrs. Winnow and Theora were clearing the breakfast table. An embarrassing silence prevailed, quite contrary to the usual cheerful conversation that accompanied their house-work. It had been decided in their conversation last night that Mrs. Winnow should take advantage of the first good opportunity to talk with their daughter of the matter they were sure was troubling her. They felt certain that Theora had troubles that she had not confided to them, for her mother had on one occasion found her in her room crying, and a number of times her flushed face and swollen eyes had revealed the secret. After a prolonged embarrassing silence, Mrs. Winnow, with considerable effort, spoke.

"Theora, what will you and Herbert do about your churches?"

"I don't know, mamma," answered Theora, blushing deeply—she knew not why, for there was really no one in all the world in whom she would have so readily confided or to whom she would have more willingly intrusted her secrets. "I really don't know. I have wanted to talk to you or papa or some one about it for some time, but I didn't—I didn't—O, I don't know, mamma—I just couldn't."

"And I have wanted to talk with you, The-

ora. I knew you were troubled about something, and I suspected what it was. I knew it was my duty to speak to you, but I hesitated to mention the matter to you. I fear I have not done my duty toward my child," said Mrs. Winnow, a tear glistening in her eye.

"O no, mamma, it wasn't your fault. You couldn't help it?" she said, and seeing the tear in her mother's eye, stepped over quickly to her side, and placing her hand upon her mother's left cheek, imprinted a kiss on the right. "No, no, mamma, it wasn't any fault of yours," she repeated, the tears dimming her own eyes.

"Come, Theora," said her mother, "the table is cleared now. Let us go into the front room, and talk the matter over."

"Now, Theora," she continued after they were seated, "tell me all. I am sure you do not need keep anything back. I guesst from the questions you askt Brother Merlin yesterday that you and Herbert had been discussing the matter."

"Yes, we have talkt about it, but the more we talk about it the harder it seems to settle it. And I don't want to leave it the way it is."

"How do you mean, Theora?"

"Why, for one of us to belong to one church and one to another. I don't think that

would look right, nor be right, either. Do you?"

"No," replied the mother, after a moment's thought, "not if it could be avoided."

"That is exactly the question, mamma. How can it be avoided?"

"I do not know. Does Herbert have any objections to the Methodist church? Have you askt him to come into your church?"

"Why, no, mamma; it wouldn't seem right to me to do that. You know we were converted at the same meeting and joined the churches at about the same time. And then I know he doesn't like all the doctrines of the Methodist church anyway."

"Has Herbert askt you to join his church?"

"No, he has never done that."

"Have neither of you made any proposition for settling the question, Theora?"

"I offered to leave the matter entirely to him; but he said he would not decide it for me, that I had the same right to my opinion that he had to his, and that it would not be right for him to decide even if I were willing."

"Does Herbert seem to hold strongly to the Presbyterian church?"

"Really I don't believe he likes either of the churches; or for that matter, any of them."

"I suspected as much from the questions he

askt Brother Merlin yesterday. But what will he do if he does not like any of them? He will have to join some church, or remain outside, and that would never do. He must not expect to find everything just as he wants it, even in the church."

"But, mamma, Herbert is not the only one. You know there are quite a number of the converts that have not united with any church; and I was talking with Mary Rule yesterday after the Endeavor, and she said their folks had decided not to join any of the churches, that her father had borrowed and read the creeds of two or three of the churches here, and that he didn't like them, and that they were disgusted with the way the churches were doing anyway."

Mr. Rule was the president of the First National Bank of Sandpre, and he and his wife and five of their children, one a married daughter, were converted during the meeting.

"But I think they are making a mistake, and may see it later," said Mrs. Winnow.

"Herbert says one ought not to join any church whose doctrines he does not believe; and I think he is certainly right, is he not, mamma?"

"I had never thought much about that, Theora, but I am sure you and Herbert could both

live Christian lives in the Methodist church, as thousands of others have done."

"But if he doesn't believe its doctrines, would it be right for him to join the church, and would he be allowed to do it?" askt Theora, with deep interest.

"I am not prepared to answer that question, Theora," answered Mrs. Winnow, after a moment's thought, "but surely every Christian ought to find a home in the church."

"But, mamma, Herbert says there was a time when all Christians were in one church; before they had these Disciplines and Constitutions—nothing but the Bible."

"I do not know about that. Probably there was."

"Why wouldn't that be better now?"

"You remember, Theora, that Brother Merlin explained that yesterday. If people of all those different beliefs and faiths were in one church there would be no end to quarrels, disputes and contentions. Is not that what he said?"

"I think that is what he said, but I think Herbert was nearer right than was Brother Merlin, mamma."

"Theora," said Mrs. Winnow, in a tone of gentle admonition, "I want you to respect Herbert; that's all right. But you must not

put his opinion, in matters like these, above that of your pastor. Rev. Merlin has made a careful lifetime study of these matters, while Herbert knows but little of such things."

"But, mamma, during that meeting the members of all the churches workt together, and why wasn't it just as important to keep heresy and contention, etc., out of that meeting as it is to keep them out of the church?"

"O, you know, Theora, that was not really a church. That was just a revival, in which the Christians of all denominations met and workt together for the conversion of the unsaved."

"Well, isn't that what the church is for, mamma?"

"Not altogether, Theora; its mission is also to look after and care for them after they have made the start in the Christian life."

"Well, why couldn't they do that all the better if all the Christians were in one church, like they were in that meeting?"

"Brother Merlin answered that question, Theora; don't you remember?"

"But, mamma," answered Theora, with the slightest hint at impatience in her tone, "there was certainly no quarreling or contention during that meeting. It all came afterward, when the different churches tried to get the

converts; and there would have been no such occasion for all that trouble if there had been only the one church."

"If this were best, Theora, our ministers and elders and bishops would advise such a course. They are much better prepared to decide such questions than we are, and I am willing that they should do it."

"But, mamma, that doesn't settle the matter we were going to talk about. What ought I to do? Shall I go with Herbert to his church, or remain in another?"

"I am not ready to advise you," answered Mrs. Winnow, after a short silence. "May be some way will be opened up yet. I cannot bear the thought of your going away from the church of your father and your mother, where you have been raised," and the mother's face became serious, even sad, as she cast a loving, longing glance at her daughter.

This was the first opportunity Theora had had of laying bare her entire thoughts and feelings in this matter to one in whom she could fully trust; and now as she realized her mother's affectionate desire to help her, and at the same time her utter inability to do so, Theora's face flushed, her eyes filled with tears, and she laid her head on the table before her and wept, almost aloud.

Mrs. Winnow's eyes too were moist, as she walkt over beside her daughter and put her arm around her, saying:

"Theora, this will not help it any, dear; come, cheer up; and we will talk it over again when your father is here." But Theora wept only the more; and well she might, for tears are nature's merciful agents of relief for the pent-up sorrows of the human soul.

CHAPTER VI.

AN EVENING VISIT OF THE SAME DAY.

"Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."—
Rom. 14:5.

Mr. Brown's family was seated around the supper table. Mr. Brown and Herbert were not going back to the store after supper, as there was no extra work to be done, and the head clerk could look after the business and close the store at eight o'clock.

"Jake was about drunk today," said Mr. Brown, looking across the table at his son.

"Yes, I think so," answered Herbert, sadly.

"What! Jake Adams! Was he drinking?" asked Mrs. Brown, in surprise.

"Yes," said Mr. Brown, "he had about all he could carry."

"Poor Sarah!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown, "the news will almost break her heart! Father, can't those 'joints' be stopt?" she added, addressing her husband.

"Not while public sentiment favors them," replied her husband.

Mr. Brown was a member of the city coun-

cil. The mayor and three of the five councilmen were church members, and by no means favored the use of liquor as a beverage. The state had the best and strongest prohibitory liquor law in America. And yet it was generally conceded that where public sentiment favored the violation of the law it was folly to try to enforce it. And so the three "jointists" regularly once a month went thru the form of being arrested, pleading "guilty" and paying each a fine of \$50 into the city treasury to help defray the expenses of the city; and upon the payment of this "license" had the implied warranty of immunity from further molestation by the authorities.

"It doesn't seem that the Methodist crusade is effecting much," added Mr. Brown, after a short silence.

"I don't see how it **could**," said Herbert.

"Why, Herbert?" asked his mother, with a look more of curiosity than surprise.

"Well, in the first place, I don't think that is the way to go about it; and in the second place, I don't think those managing the crusade expect to accomplish anything; at least, not so much as they pretend."

"Why do you think that, Herbert?"

"Last Saturday Rev. Merlin prayed in each of the 'joints' for the Lord to speedily put an

end to the liquor traffic; and the roughs and toughs on the street have been laughing about it ever since, and saying that if the Lord should answer his prayer he would be the worst surprised man in town—and I believe it.”

“But it is all right to pray for such things, Herbert. I do not think that part is wrong,” replied his mother.

“What’s the use of law if we don’t use it? And why did the Christians pray for the prohibitory amendment and the laws, as they claim they did; and what’s the use of officers, if we can get all these things just by praying for them? Did they expect God to enforce the laws when they got them? With the laws we have and a great big two-hundred-pound preacher doing nothing more than to lead a few women around once a week from one ‘joint’ to another, praying God to close them up, and three or four more preachers not doing even that much, and four or five churches never saying a word or doing a thing against them, I don’t think God, or anybody else that’s got any sense, is going to close those ‘joints.’ The ‘jointists’ don’t have the least fear of them—they laugh at them. I tell you, they’re actually enjoying these prayer meetings.”

"We are all opposed to the liquor business, of course," said Mr. Brown, considerably surprised at the spirit shown by his son; "but it is simply foolish to undertake to do a thing when we know it is absolutely impossible to accomplish it, no matter how desirable or beneficial such a thing might be. Public sentiment is against us, and that is stronger than the law."

"I don't believe it, father," replied Herbert, firmly, though respectfully. "Other laws have been enforced in opposition to public sentiment, and why cannot this? What is the public sentiment here anyway?" he asked, somewhat animated. "The mayor and three of the five councilmen are members of the different churches, the police judge is a deacon in the Baptist church, and I believe three-fourths of the business men, and about the same proportion of the heads of families, of Sandpre, are church members. Do the toughs, the street loafers, the bums and cow-boys make public sentiment? Do the three fellows running the 'joints' here, two of them nothing but tramps before they opened up here, and the other a thief, who had served a term in the penitentiary for horse-stealing—do they make the public sentiment?"

"Well, Herbert, what would you do about it?" askt his father, smiling slightly, yet showing by his tone and expression that he recognized both truth and logic in his son's argument.

"Well, I wouldn't run around after them praying and singing," answered Herbert. "I should certainly try to show as much manhood at least as they. I would arrest them under the laws of the state, and prosecute them?"

"But, Herbert, that is not the work of the minister," said his mother.

"Well, what is their work then, mother? Is it anything except preaching on Sundays, and quarreling over the converts during the week, until they drive them back to the saloons? That's what they have done here. I'll venture that right now Jake Adams is back at the 'joint', and he will be carried home drunk before morning, and his mother will sit up and pray and cry over him the rest of the night," and Herbert's face became white with feeling. "Jake's conversion was just as genuine as anybody's. No one doubts that. But there's no more hopes for him now. He'll never try again. He'll die a drunkard; and the churches and the 'joints' will be equally guilty."

"Herbert," again spoke his mother, "you must not talk that way. You must not thus as-

sociate the churches and the 'joints'. For the one is good and the other evil. It may be true that all the churches are not doing just what they ought, but still they are doing more than any other institution toward bettering society and morals. Think what this town would be without them! No, Herbert, you should not talk that way. Because you think you see something in the church to criticise is not sufficient reason for condemning the whole church."

"Anyway, mother, I do not think the church is what it ought to be when it outnumbers two or three to one the liquor element in a community, and has the law and justice and right all on its side, and yet lets the liquor element have its own way, and says it can't help itself. I don't think it is any wonder that it has lost so much of the respect of the outside world."

Before any one had time to reply, they heard the gate latch click, and a step on the walk.

"That is Brother Collins, I expect," said Mrs. Brown. "I told him that you wanted him to call this evening, Herbert, and it is just the time he said he would be here."

The minister entered, shook hands, and was seated. He was a spare built man of about middle age, rather nervous temperament, and

courteous manners. He had been pastor there for nearly two years, and was well liked by his membership.

"Well, Brother Herbert, Sister Brown told me you wanted to talk with me," said the pastor, turning to Herbert, after a brief conversation.

Mrs. Brown felt her heart beat quicker. Mr. Brown glanced up first at the minister, then at his son. It was to them a very important occasion, for they both understood the motive that had led Herbert to request the interview. Tho neither of them had ever talkt with him directly on the subject of church preference, yet they had talkt together about it a number of times, and it had been a very weighty matter on their minds. Mrs. Brown had told her husband of the conversation on the occasion of Mrs. Trego's visit, and Mr. Brown had related the discussion that took place in the store between "Uncle Tim" Griggs and their pastor, where, tho Herbert had taken no part, yet his sympathy for the sentiments of the old pioneer was clearly apparent; and now the conversation that had been ended by the coming of the minister had only added much to the fear that was already in the parents' minds—the fear that their son, their only son, should refuse to accept the doctrines and authority of

their church, for this they understood to mean *heresy*—there was no blacker term in their religious category. And they now awaited with the deepest anxiety and interest the conversation that had just been introduced.

“Yes,” replied Herbert, “I want to talk with you about the Constitution of the church. There are some things in it that I do not understand, or rather, I should say, that I am afraid I do understand.”

“Well, what are they, Brother Herbert?” asked the minister, “I shall be glad to assist you if I can.”

“There are several things, Rev. Collins, that I want light on. But before going further, I want to confess that I think I made a mistake in uniting with the church before I knew what it stood for. And I do not take all the blame upon myself, either; for it seems to me that before any church should allow any one to enter it as a member, it is its duty to him to make clear its doctrines, especially those upon which there is difference of opinion.”

“That would not do, Brother Herbert, for the new convert would then be without a home just when he needed it most. It would be just as reasonable to refuse them fellowship until they understood all the Bible.”

"I don't look at it that way," replied Herbert, after a moment's thoughtful pause. "If I believe the Bible to be the word of God, to be inspired, that settles the question as to its truth, whether I have read it or not; and after that I read it for the truth, not to see whether or not it is true. I don't suppose any one claims that this creed is inspired, do they?"

"O no, Brother Herbert, we do not claim that; but it is just as true, for it is based upon the inspired teachings of the Bible."

"That's a question that every one has a right to investigate, is it not?"

"O yes, to be sure."

"If you admit that our Constitution is simply the work of uninspired men, it seems to me that is virtually admitting that it is subject to error; and that is just the reason I do not believe any minister should invite (or, for that matter, allow) any one to join his church until he has clearly explained its peculiar, or distinctive, doctrines."

"But, Brother Herbert, you must remember that the doctrines held by our church were extracted from the Holy Scriptures by most learned and pious councils, and have stood the test of ages, and that our parents and grandparents and thousands of others have lived and died in triumph under them."

"All of which may be true," answered Herbert, "but the most learned and most pious councils may err; and could not all you have just said be as truthfully said of other creeds than the Presbyterian, of creeds that differ from it, and even of some that directly contradict it? Were not they written by pious learned councils, too? And have not many Christians lived in such churches?"

"But," replied the minister, "because there are many creeds and many churches is no reason for condemning ours, even if some of them are contradictory. The fact that error exists does not refute truth. You will find that many doctrines are taught and held merely for the sake of popularity or other unchristian purpose, and will not stand the test of Scripture; while the doctrines of our church are all clearly and unmistakably taught and supported by the Holy Scriptures."

"That is exactly the point I wish to arrive at," said Herbert. "So far as I have been able to search, I have not found it so."

The minister, as well as both the father and the mother, started a little in surprise at this blunt statement of Herbert's.

"You have not found the Constitution to agree with the Bible?" asked the minister, incredulously. "I am indeed surprised and

grieved to hear you say that, Brother Herbert; and I trust I may be able to enlighten you, for I am sure it is you, and not the Constitution, that is in error. Pray what have you found in our Confession of Faith that you object to?"

"I have markt several places in it," replied Herbert; "one of them is the article on Baptism."

"What fault do you find there?" askt the pastor, with interest.

"I'll get the Constitution," said Herbert, stepping to the table and picking up the book and opening it and turning to the article in question as he reseated himself. "Here is the way it reads:

"'Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but Baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person.'"

"Did you not read the Scripture references given below in connection with that article; and do they not make it absolutely clear?" askt the minister, and then without waiting for an answer, continued: "We must remember, Brother Herbert, that God's ways are not always man's ways. It is not a question of what we think something *ought to be*, but of what *God's word teaches*."

"Your last statement is exactly what I think, Rev. Collins, though I could not have worded my thought so well, and that is the reason I object to this statement in our Constitution. Answering your first question as to whether the Scripture references given in connection with this article do not make it absolutely clear, I must say that I do not find any evidence in them at all."

"O, you do not understand them. Read them," said the minister, confidently.

"Well, three of them are taken from Acts, and one from Corinthians. I will read those from Acts first:

"'And they that gladly received his word, were baptized; and the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls.'—2:41.

"'Then answered Peter, can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?'—10:46-7.

"'And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes: and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.'—16:33.

"I do not find in these passages even a hint as to the mode of baptism, unless it be on the word itself; and I lookt that up in the dictionary there," said Herbert, pointing to a fine two-volume morocco bound copy of the "Standard Dictionary" in the holder near him, "and the only meaning it gives for the Greek word *bapto*, from which this word is taken, is

dip, the very meaning this article condemns."

"You must not be so ready, Brother Herbert, to pass judgment. That is not the point at all. Do you notice in the first passage quoted the number baptised—three thousand? Do you suppose they could have *dip*t or *immersed* that many?"

"I don't know. How many did the baptizing?" askt Herbert, with a curious expression that clearly indicated that this was a novel idea to him.

"Well, we do not know that," replied the minister, slowly.

"I should think it would depend somewhat upon that, Rev. Collins—but does it really take any longer to dip a person than to sprinkle him?" askt Herbert, thoughtfully.

"Why, certainly," replied the minister.

"My own observation has been to the contrary," said Herbert; "but even if it did require longer to immerse one than to sprinkle him, there would yet be no proof here until we knew the time spent on this occasion in this ceremony and the number assisting, neither of which is known or even hinted. But in each of the other passages I have read it is a small number that is baptized."

"It is the circumstances that afford the proof in them," said the minister, with an as-

sumed air of decision. "One of these instances is the baptism of Cornelius' household at Caesarea, and the other is the account of Paul and Silas in the home of the jailor; and there is no evidence in either case that they went out of the house to baptize, and it is hardly plausible that they had baptistries in their houses."

"Is there anything to show that they did not go out of the houses?" askt Herbert.

"I do not know that there is," answered Rev. Collins.

"Do you think such evidence would have material weight with any just court of the United States?" askt Herbert.

"We do not test these things in the United States courts," replied the minister, with a smile, half sneer, on his face.

"Is this the strongest evidence we have to support this doctrine?" askt Herbert, with a look of disgust.

"Read the other passage given for reference."

"It has no reference to Christian baptism, for it refers to the children of Israel under the leadership of Moses long before the Christian era. However, it reads:

"'And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.'"—I Cor. 10:2,

"This is not cited as an example of Christian baptism, but to show the mode. Now, do you suppose they were immersed in the cloud or in the sea?" said the minister, half sarcastically.

"You will certainly admit, Rev. Collins, that in either instance they were not sprinkled or poured. They were certainly entirely enveloped or covered over in the cloud, and in the sea the water stood up in walls on either side, and I can see somewhat a resemblance there to a grave, to which I think Paul compares baptism. But as this was more than a thousand years before Christian baptism was ever heard of, it seems to me a long way to go for evidence that does not even hint at the truth of what we are trying to prove, but on the contrary seems to disprove it. It does seem to me very much like an attempt on the part of our church to deceive, instead of teaching the truth in this matter."

"That is a pretty serious charge, Brother Herbert, for a member of the church to make," said the minister, coloring, "and I do not understand on what grounds you make it."

"Simply on this ground," replied Herbert, growing bolder; "they have here defined the mode of baptism, and they have not quoted a single passage of Scripture that would in any

way indicate any mode—unless it be the meaning of the word itself, and that would prove the very mode they condemn. Why don't they quote the Scripture that would suggest the mode, unless they are afraid of it in the face of their definition?"

"What Scripture?" answered the minister, impatiently.

"I found by the use of the concordance a number of passages that seem to suggest the mode," replied Herbert, taking a slip of paper from the Presbyterian "Constitution" in his hand. "Why didn't they refer to Acts 8:38: 'They went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him;' or Mat. 3:15: 'And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water;' or Rom. 6:4: 'Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death;' or Jn. 3:23: 'John also was baptizing in Aenon, near to Salim, because there was much water there;' or Col. 2:12: 'Buried with him in baptism, wherein also we are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God.'"

"Then you would unchurch your father and your mother and the thousands of other noble Christians that have held this faith, just because you imagine your own opinion better

than the establisht faith?" askt the minister, with a grim, half cruel, smile.

For an instant the blood rusht to Herbert's face.

"I should say that is practically begging the question," replied Herbert, looking the minister straight in the face. "Not a bit of it, sir. I do not believe that any man, or set of men, council or church, has any right to define the Scripture for me, much less to substitute error for it; and I am sure I do not wish to define it for another. But for myself I think I have a right to search the Scriptures."

"You have only the superficial significance of the Scripture you quote. There is a deeper, fuller and more beautiful significance to it all, which you will be able to grasp only when you are better acquainted with it; and the wise thing for you to do now is to accept the opinion of your superiors until you are competent to understand these things," said the minister, in a patronizing tone.

"Does not this excellence in the interpretation of Scripture and in seeing its truth and beauty, to which you speak of attaining, carry with it the ability of explaining it to others?" askt Herbert, with a sarcasm that almost shockt his parents and brought the blood to the face of the minister.

"I am inclined to believe, Brother Herbert, that you have askt for this conference not so much to seek information as to exhibit that which you erroneously think you have. This is not the spirit with which one should enter the church."

"You are mistaken, Rev. Collins. I have no such desire. But when the only final answers to my inquiries are that I am not competent to understand these things, and that I will understand them better when I know more, etc.; at the same time requiring me to say that I believe them, while at the same time you acknowledge your inability to explain them to me, or rather my inability to comprehend them—this is to me exasperating, Rev. Collins. But if I have said anything that is not courteous or right, I assure you I beg your pardon. But as to the spirit with which I have entered the church, I have already confessed that I think I made a mistake; and I am sure I am as ready to correct it as you may be to have me do it."

Just then there was a knock at the door; and before any one had time even to rise, it opened, and Mrs. Adams entered. Her face was pale and worn, her eyes red with weeping and almost wild in expression. All started at her appearance and rose to their feet.

CHAPTER VII.

INTERIOR OF A "JOINT."

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."—Prov. 20:1.

Mrs. Adams on entering the room stood for a moment slightly dazed by the glaring light, as it was very dark outside. She looked about the room as if seeking some object until her eyes rested upon Herbert, and then advancing excitedly directly toward him, she said:

"O Herbert, I want you to go and hunt Jake and bring him home to me. He has been drinking, and I begged him not to go back to town, but I couldn't keep him. He said he would be right back, and it has now been an hour. I know he will come with you, Herbert; for he told me about your talk the day he worked for Mr. Winnow, and I know he likes you, and he will listen to you. I expect you will find him at the saloon; but wherever you find him, and however you find him, bring him home, Herbert. O, my boy! my poor, poor boy! O God, save my boy!" she

cried piteously, lifting her eyes and hands in the attitude of prayer, and then dropping her hands upon her breast she staggered backward; but Mr. Brown, who was nearest her, caught her, and they assisted her to a chair.

"We had best put her on the bed," said Mrs. Brown, excitedly.

"No, no," she moaned, "I must go home." And then turning to Herbert, she added; "You'll go, won't you, Herbert, and bring him home?"

"Yes," said Herbert, "I'll try."

"Now," she said, turning to the others, as Herbert took his hat and started, "take me home, for they will be there directly, I know. I know Herbert will bring him to me. If he had only joined the church! O Jake! My poor, poor boy!" she wailed piteously, as she wrung her hands and rockt herself back and forth in the chair, deaf to the entreaties of those about her.

Herbert walkt rapidly down the street. He had an impression that Jake most frequently went to "Bill" Miller's place, and as that was nearest he had decided to go there first. "Bill" Miller had carried a pretty hard name for years. He was a recognized bully, as well as a thief, for he had served a term in the penitentiary for horse-stealing. As Herbert ap-

proacht his place he heard voices inside. In his hurry he had never once thought of how he should perform his mission—only of what he should do. He walkt straight into the "joint" without pausing. It was the first time he was ever inside one, and as he lookt around him he felt somewhat embarrassed. But he recognized a number of familiar faces, and among them the flushed face of Jake. He walkt straight up to him, and laying his hand on his shoulder, said:

"Come, Jake, let's go home."

"Go home! I ain't got no bis'ness to home," said Jake, looking up in surprise.

"Let 'im alone," came a heavy gruff voice from behind the bar; and looking in that direction, Herbert recognized the big form and the brutal face of "Bill" Miller, the proprietor.

"Come, take a drink with me," said Jake, pulling at his sleeve, "and then I will go home with you."

"That's right!" "Fair enough!" "Make him do it!" and other expressions burst from the noisy crowd, accompanied by drunken "Ha-has."

"O no, Jake, you know I do not drink; and you must not drink any more tonight. Come, let's go."

"Temperance, eh?" "Ha! ha!" "Ho! ho!" from the boisterous company.

Herbert had never before been in such company, and though he had no coward's heart, he was not a little embarrassed by the uncouth greeting he was receiving from the half-drunk-en crowd.

"Let him be. He's of age, and has a right to go and stay where he pleases." The voice came from a table where two men were playing checkers. Turning, Herbert recognized Frank Tuttle, the sheriff of the county. He was at first slightly abashed at his presence and words, and then realizing who the big fellow was, his embarrassment suddenly left him, and turning toward him, he said:

"If I am not mistaken, Mr. Tuttle, it is your duty as an officer of the law to be giving evidence against such an establishment as this, instead of encouraging it."

"My advice to you, young fellow, is to get out of here and attend to your own business," said the sheriff, indignantly.

"Come on, boys," shouted Jake; staggering toward the counter and throwing down a dollar, "this is my treat. Fill 'em up, Bill. Come on, Herbert, an' take a drink with us."

"Don't let him have any more," said Herbert, extending his hand toward the proprie-

tor, who had just tost the dollar into the cash-drawer; "he has too much already, as you well know."

"To h—l with ye!" exclaimed the powerful voice of the bully. "A man gits here w'at he pays fur; an' I don't 'low no d—d fools ter interfere nuther. They don't no man dictate bis'ness ter Bill Miller, spec'ly no d—d young sucker like ye!" he said, glaring like a demon at Herbert.

"Your business is open violation of the law, and you are no better than an outlaw," said Herbert, turning full toward him. "You ought to be ashamed to sell him another drink, and if you were a man you wouldn't do it."

"A man, eh! If I wus a man, eh! What d'ye mean by that?" hist the enraged bartender through his teeth.

"I mean just what I say, sir," replied Herbert, firmly; "I mean you are no man if you sell Jake Adams another drink tonight, seeing the condition he is in."

"You d—d ———, Bill Miller'll show ye whether he's a man," and he started around the counter, fairly gnashing his teeth in rage.

All cleared the way for the big "joint"-keeper. They were not more than eight feet apart when he turned the end of the counter, and he

advanced directly toward Herbert, his fierce eyes and brutal face looking more like an infuriated beast than a human being. Herbert turned directly facing him, his face white, his lips drawn tight, his strong jaw firmly set, his eyes gleaming with a fierceness they had never known before. He stood erect, his hands clenched, the strong muscles of his arms and shoulders contracted, his whole form swaying slightly under the high tension of every muscle in it, like a beast crouching the instant before it springs upon its adversary.

"Lay your hands on me, you beastly thief," said Herbert, in a deep, guttural voice, "and I'll show you it's no boy your handling."

Herbert Brown felt within himself an impulse to rush upon his antagonist, and the desire seemed to permeate his whole body, every muscle and sinew; so much so that he could hardly refrain from dashing forward and smiting his advancing enemy with a crushing blow. The bully, warmed by drink and burning with rage, was advancing. Herbert's arms came spontaneously into position. The left hand tightly clenched was slightly advanced, and the right drawn back to a line with the shoulder, the body leaning slightly forward in readiness to deliver the blow he could hardly await the opportunity for.

"Hol' on thar, Bill Miller! The boy's in the right, an' ye're in the wrong! Don't ye dare ter strike 'im, er ye'll larn 'at Ol' Tim's han' ain't los' its cunnin' yet!" and the form of "Old Tim" Griggs rusht between the ready, eager combatants. "Don't ye tech 'im!" repeated the old man, his heavy cane raised in his right hand and his left hand against the breast of the bully.

Just then the sheriff and one or two others rusht up and seized Miller, who began to struggle violently to free himself.

"Let me loose! Let me loose, d—n ye! Let me smash his —— —— face!"

Herbert had not moved from his position, nor had his features or attitude changed. His eyes flasht even more, as he listened to the curses and vile names hurled at him by his furious enemy.

"Let him loose, if you want to," said Herbert, through his teeth, "I'll take care of him; and what's more I shall see if there is not a way of stopping his class of business."

"Let me loose! Let me loose, I tell ye! I'll fix him!" shouted Miller, renewing his struggles.

During all this Jake Adams did not seem to realize what was taking place, so thoroughly was he under the influence of drink, but now

the loud threats of Bill Miller seemed to awaken him to a consciousness of the situation, and reeling forward, he said:

"Ye say ye'll fix Herbert Brown? (hic) He's my frien', an' any feller 'at (hic) touches him'll have me ter lick! D'ye understan'?" said Jake, staggering in between the two men.

"Come, come, Bill, this won't do. Your place is behind the counter," said the sheriff, pushing him along. Bill Miller reluctantly yielded and allowed himself to be pusht back behind the counter, at the same time muttering oaths and imprecations against any one that would dare to insult him in his own place of business.

"Now, let's have the drinks!" shouted some one in the crowd.

"Yes, yes," came from different mouths.

"Come on," said Jake, staggering back toward the counter, "I've paid for 'em."

"No, Jake," said Herbert, catching him by the shoulder and turning him part way around, "you must not drink any more tonight. You have too much already."

"Let 'im alone!" came a voice from the crowd.

"I have come here tonight at the request of his sick mother to bring him home," said Herbert, turning toward the crowd with a deter-

mined countenance, "and, tho I may not be able to take him home, yet he will not take a drink while I am here."

"See here, Jake," said Uncle Tim Griggs, stepping up directly in front of him and laying his hand firmly on his shoulder, "see here; Herbert Brown's the best frien' ye've got in this crowd, an' now you go on home with 'im."

"Well, I guess I'll do it if you (hic) say so," said Jake with an effort to keep his eyes open, "but come on, let's have a drink first."

"No, Jake; you've had 'nough a'ready. You go on with Herbert."

"Then gimme back my (hic) dollar," he said, turning toward the proprietor.

"Give 'im back 'is doller, Bill, an' let 'im go," said Uncle Tim, addressing the bully.

"The Devil I will!" replied the other, "'tain't his doller. It's mine, an' the feller 'at gits it'll arn it."

"Look 'e here, Bill Miller," said Uncle Tim, walking up close to the counter and pointing his cane straight into the face of the bully, "ef ye keep thet doller, ye'll steal it! D'ye hear?"

"He ordered the drinks," replied the other, shrinking back slightly from his close proximity to the end of Uncle Tim's cane, "an'

paid fer 'em. It wus a fair deal. He kin git the drinks, but he can't have the doller."

"Ef it wus Tim Griggs ye's a dealin' with, an' ye didn't give it back, he'd take it out o' yer hide," said Uncle Tim, shaking his cane still closer to the nose of the angry ruffian. "Ef ye keep it, Tim Griggs says, ye're nuthin' but a thief! D'ye understan'? Ef ye don' give it back, ye're nuthin' but a d—d thief!"

Scowling, the "joint"-keeper pulled out the money-drawer, and taking out a dollar threw it with a ring upon the counter.

"There's yer d—d doller! Take it, an' git out o' here," he said, addressing Jake.

"There's yer doller, Jake; come an' git it," said Uncle Tim, pointing to it with his cane.

Jake fumbled around, but finally succeeded in getting it; and awkwardly thrusting it into his pocket, staggered out of the building, assisted by the strong arm of Herbert.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONSULTATION.

"Upon this rock I will build my church."—Mat. 16:18.

"Come in, Herbert; just take that seat. You have probably been wondering why I askt you to call this evening? I would have told you when I made the request, but you will remember there were a number in the bank at the time, and I did not care to mention the matter in their presence."

The speaker was a gentleman about fifty years of age, sharp but kindly blue eyes, closely cropt beard, full, broad forehead, and skull exceptionally wide between the ears—indicating firmness and business ability. He was drest in a dark gray business suit. He was about medium height and of rather heavy build. It was Mr. Rule, the president of the First National Bank of Sandpre. Tho previous to the recent meeting he had made no profession of Christianity, yet he had been a very liberal contributor to moral or religious enterprises. In the preparation for the recent

meeting the churches had failed to raise the necessary amount to meet the expenses for tent rent, lumber, carpenter work, etc.—lacking nearly \$100. A committee consisting of two of the pastors had presented the matter to Mr. Rule, and he had advanced the amount, which the ministers agreed to raise during the meeting; but at the close of the meeting, Mr. Rule canceled the account, making the loan a contribution.

When Herbert had gone into the bank that afternoon to make deposit of the day's receipts, Mr. Rule had asked him if it would be convenient for him to call at his house that evening, that he had a matter of which he wished to talk with him.

"The matter of which I wish to speak to you is the church," said Mr. Rule; "but let us go into the parlor, as my family are as much interested in this as I am," and Mr. Rule led the way from the library to the parlor.

Here they met Mr. Rule's family, except the married daughter—the wife, two daughters and three sons. Mr. Rule was a man of strict business quality, and one of the wealthiest men in the county; and his family was one of the most influential and highly respected of the town. Tho the representatives of the different churches had visited them, as they had

the other converts, yet the recognized intelligence of Mr. Rule's family had prevented the domineering spirit and the dictatorial attitude with which some had approached the less favored converts. The pastors of at least three of the churches had themselves called upon Mr. Rule; but he had cut short the conversation with each with a few pointed questions, or the remark: "Just hand me at your convenience a copy of your church rules and doctrines, and I will look it over at my leisure. I am quite busy just now," or something to that effect. And after examining the same he had in each case handed it back, saying: "I have examined it carefully, but I cannot indorse it," or something similar.

"Now, Herbert," said Mr. Rule, after the usual preliminaries and a few pleasant remarks by the different members of the company, "as I have just said, the church is the matter of which we wish to talk with you. I have heard that you are dissatisfied with your church connection, or that the church is dissatisfied with your attitude, and other similar rumors. May I ask whether there is any truth in them?"

Herbert Brown colored slightly, but replied:

"I have not heard the rumors, Mr. Rule,

but I must confess that there is probably some truth in them. I was placed—or, rather, I placed myself in an embarrassing position, by uniting with a church before I knew what it stood for; I mean, before I was acquainted with its peculiar doctrines. It was certainly a very foolish, almost silly, thing to do, as I can now see; and yet I am convinced that the great majority go into the churches in just that way.”

“You signed the obligation, and read it afterwards,” broke in Mr. Rule, smiling.

“That is exactly what I did, and I am sure it doesn’t look any more foolish to you than it does to me now.”

“I did not mean to criticise, Herbert, I just happened to think of the resemblance. Go on.”

“Of course, you understand how it started. The evening I went forward, I, like all the rest, was askt my church preference. I had never thought much about that before, and as my parents belonged to the Presbyterian church, I gave that—not from any knowledge of its doctrines or principles, or preference for them, but simply because my parents belonged there.”

“Mary and I were just running the list of the converts a little while ago,” broke in Mrs. Rule, “and we find that every one of the con-

verts whose parents belong to either of the churches here have united with the church to which their parents belong, with one single exception, and one of her parents belongs to one church and one to another; and we could not help thinking that was the principal if not the only reason they had. But excuse me, Herbert. Go on, and tell the rest."

"Well, when I began reading the 'Constitution of the Presbyterian Church,' I found much there that I did not believe, and I looked the points up in the Bible the best I could, and the more I searched the Scripture the more I was convinced that some of the doctrines of that church were not taught in the Bible. I took advantage of an opportunity to talk with Rev. Merlin, and afterward took the matter to my own pastor. But neither of them gave me a satisfactory explanation, or satisfactory answers to my questions. The main argument of each of them was the high authority of those who made the creeds of their churches, or, as they expressed it, of those who extracted them from the Bible, but I had found some terms that they confessed had never been in the Bible, so I guess they had not 'extracted' them from the Bible. Each of them advised me to let the question of the truth or falsity of the doctrines of the church alone until I was bet-

ter able to understand them; but the absurdity of requiring me to believe something that I must not try to understand was too apparently unreasonable for me to consider."

"That is just what we think, Herbert," said Mrs. Rule, who had been listening very attentively to what Herbert had been relating. "I do not see the use of these different church creeds if they are all in the Bible."

"And what is not in the Bible ought not to be in the creed," said Mary, the oldest daughter, except her married sister, decisively.

"I askt Rev. Merlin that very question," said Herbert.

"What answer did he give you?" askt Mrs. Rule, before Herbert had time to finish what he was going to say.

"He said the object of their Discipline, or creed, is to protect their church from heresy, or something to that effect."

"And pray how does he expect it to protect them from heresy?" askt Mrs. Rule, with true womanly curiosity, "unless he believes the Methodist church is the only one that is free from heresy, or else admits that the creeds of the other churches serve the same purpose?"

"What is heresy, father?" askt Albert, a bright boy of fourteen, next to the youngest

member of the family. Albert had made profession of religion during the meeting.

"Well, it is not very easy to tell you just what it means, Albert; but it means a different belief from the speaker, or the church of which one is speaking. It may mean evil, or it may mean good, depending upon who says it. Paul says that he worshipt after the way called heresy, and no doubt Christ and the disciples were often called heretics." And then turning toward Herbert, Mr. Rule continued, "This seems to me a very inconsistent position that the churches take in this matter; namely, holding to these Confessions, Disciplines, etc., for the purpose of protecting themselves against heresy and error, as they claim they do, and at the same time inviting and advising people to come into the church without understanding those very doctrines."

"When I talkt with Rev. Collins and with Rev. Merlin of these matters," said Herbert, "each of them emphasized that his own church creed was *clearly* taught in the Bible. It seems to me that, inasmuch as different creeds flatly contradict one another in certain points, that to assert that one's creed is *clearly* taught in the Bible is a reflection upon either the intelligence or the integrity of the others.

I do not see how it can be interpreted otherwise."

"It cannot consistently," said Mr. Rule; "and that was exactly the interpretation put upon them when they were first formulated; and that is really the only consistent grounds for them; and when the churches abandoned that interpretation they should have abandoned their creeds also."

Herbert listened all the more attentively to what Mr. Rule was saying because he knew him to be not only a man of careful and conservative judgment, but also a man of education and very extensive reading. His library was probably the best in the town. Tho he had never made a special study of church history, yet his extensive knowledge of general history had incidentally made him pretty well acquainted with the history of the churches and their creeds, so closely is church history connected with the great events determining the birth, progress and destiny of nations.

"Do you mean," said Herbert, "that when those church creeds were adopted, the churches adopting them believed that all that did not accept them were heretics?"

"Certainly," replied Mr. Rule. "And what is more, until the laws of the different nations

forbade it, they punisht those that rejected their creeds by death or otherwise."

"Did the Presbyterian or the Methodist church ever do that?" askt Herbert.

"The Presbyterian did, but the Methodist church was not organized until after the laws of nations forbade persecution for religious belief. But the spirit of intolerance is the spirit of persecution, and the only reason it does not reveal itself as such is the wholesome laws of our nation that prohibit it. The spirit in this nineteenth century that would dictate to another his creed, or that would refuse him fellowship because of an honest opinion of Scripture, is the same that in the fifteenth century burned Huss, Jerome and others at the stake, and that tortured, slew and burned thousands of others. These records of history kept me for a long time from becoming a Christian," continued Mr. Rule. "As I read these accounts of murder, robbery, and persecution, I thought I was reading the history of Christianity; and I had read of no heathen religion the pages of whose history were blacker with sin or redder with crime. But I have learned that all this is absolutely contrary to both the letter and the spirit of the Bible."

"Do you suppose, Mr. Rule, there was a time

when there was only one church, and when they had none of these creeds?" askt Herbert.

"Undoubtedly so. The church was not divided until the fourth century, when the first doctrine was laid down by a church council, if we could call it that, which historians describe as a mob of angry men, many of them armed, and whose conduct they compare to that of an assembly of gladiators. Unscrupulous, scheming kings and other ambitious men saw in the growing Christian church a power that they could use to their own selfish ends, and they seized upon it, and this is at the bottom of almost every one of those doctrines that have formed the basis of religious schism."

"What was that doctrine," askt Herbert, with interest.

"That was the doctrine called the 'Trinity,' " replied Mr. Rule.

"Is the doctrine true, father?" askt Seth, a young man of nineteen, the oldest son.

"I would not pretend to say," answered Mr. Rule, "for I have not made a study of it. The most of the churches accept it, tho that would be an argument neither for nor against it, for they do that for the same reason that we wear buttons on the back of long-tailed coats."

"What's that, father?" askt nine-year-old

Robert, his eyes sparkling with childish curiosity.

"Because our fathers did," replied his father.

"But why did they do it?" again inquired Robert, his curiosity not to be so easily satisfied.

"Well," replied Mr. Rule, musing, "Fashion requires the wearing of the buttons and the churches require a belief in the creeds, both as relics of old customs or practices that have past away so long ago that the common people have forgotten them. Generations ago, when the nobles, who wore long coats, went on their hunting expeditions, and on other occasions, they used to button up their coat tails; and, like the creeds, the buttons have been retained, tho the necessity for them has long since past away."

"Was there a time when creeds were necessary, father?" askt Seth.

"I do not mean to say," replied Mr. Rule, "that these creeds or doctrines, as tests of Christianity, were ever necessary; but for more than a thousand years it was very important that one believed them, or at least pretended to."

"Why was it more important then than now

to believe them, or to pretend to believe them, father?" askt Mary.

"To doubt or deny them then meant imprisonment, confiscation of property, banishment, or death. Hundreds of thousands were thus punisht."

"Is a belief of these doctrines important now, father?" again askt Mary.

"Not so important as honesty of convictions. They are simply man's opinions of the teachings of Scripture, and should never be made tests of Christian fellowship, as they are. Those that we find taught in the Bible we have a right to accept; and those we do not believe to be there we certainly have an equal right to reject. As to this doctrine of which we are speaking, the 'Trinity,' certainly a belief in it neither makes nor unmakes Christians; and it was never made a test by Christ or his apostles or disciples."

"Then it certainly ought not be now," said Herbert.

"Why would it not be well if all the churches would drop their creeds and all fellowship and worship together?" askt Mrs. Rule.

"I askt Rev. Merlin that question," said Herbert, "and he replied that such a church would be full of contention, quarreling, etc.,

or something to that effect; but I don't believe it."

"Rev. Merlin is unmistakably wrong there," said Mr. Rule; "it is not the holding of different opinions that creates this bitter feeling among churches and Christians, but the refusal to fellowship on account of difference of opinion—this spirit of intolerance by which one man says to another: My opinion is better than yours; you have no right to an opinion that differs from mine. Instead of leading to contention and schism, such a freedom would tend toward unity of faith, for instead of reading the Bible for Scripture to prove their own church doctrine, they would read it for the truth."

"Why wouldn't that be right now?" asked Mary, her face beaming. "That would be like the meeting at the tent, would it not?"

"It would be even better than that," replied Mr. Rule, "for there would not be the envy and jealousy that existed in that meeting among the different factions, which manifested itself after the meeting had closed."

"O, wouldn't that be just grand!" exclaimed Ruth, a bright girl of sixteen, the youngest daughter. "Father, why couldn't we build a large church house instead of rent-

ing a tent, and all have church together, like we did during the meeting?"

Every face in the audience indicated its strong sympathy with Ruth's enthusiastic proposition. Ruth's dark brown eyes, just like her mother's, were fairly beaming with joy, as she imagined the impossibility of the rejection of her proposition.

"What is your idea, Herbert?" askt Mr. Rule.

"I do not know that I fully understand the exact meaning of your question, Mr. Rule; and I doubt whether I could answer it if I did, for I do not have any very definite ideas in this matter. However, I cannot help thinking that it would have been a wonderful blessing to all in the churches and those outside, too, if, while that meeting was going on so successfully, and all were enjoying it so gloriously, by some strange spell the memory of their churches and church creeds and prejudices could have vanished forever, and by some magic art all the church houses of Sandpre could have been taken down and the material erected into one grand commodious building, to take the place of the tent. While that is about my idea of what the church ought to be, yet I can see so many obstacles in the way of reaching it that my imagination pictures its

accomplishment only through some magic or supernatural power."

"Good! good!" exclaimed Ruth, clapping her hands.

"Herbert, you have certainly spoken well," said Mrs. Rule.

Herbert had not thought of being eloquent, but the expression of his face and the earnestness of his tones were in themselves an eloquence that no niceties of rhetoric could have surpast.

"I have been thinking some along this line," said Mr. Rule, "tho I have not attempted to formulate any definite plan. I agree with you that there are a good many difficulties and obstacles in the way. Probably some of them are impossible to overcome—I do not know. But inasmuch as this course seems unquestionably right, I believe it is our duty to make at least some effort in that direction."

"I don't understand you," said Herbert, with an inquisitive expression.

"I mean an attempt toward unity in Christian worship," replied Mr. Rule. "I mean an attempt to build a union church, which shall be simply *Christian*—not Methodist, or Baptist, or Presbyterian, but just *Christian*—where every Christian of whatever creed may

worship without being questioned as to his peculiar doctrines."

Strange as it may seem to the reader, Herbert Brown was actually startled by this statement from Mr. Rule. Though Herbert had fully meant all he had been saying, yet he had not thought of so practical an application of it. He had really forgotten that he was talking with so thoroughly practical a business man, a man who never built an air castle but with the intention of replacing it with one built with hands.

"You mean actually to build another house of worship, Mr. Rule?" asked Herbert.

"Why, certainly; what else could I mean," replied Mr. Rule.

"Would it be your idea then to organize another church with the Bible as its only creed?" asked Herbert, with the deepest interest.

"I am not fully decided in that matter," replied Mr. Rule. "That would undoubtedly be best if all would unite on that basis, and forget their contentions and bitterness and prejudice toward each other; but I can hardly believe such a thing would be immediately possible. But at least it could be a place for holding occasional 'union' meetings like the one recently held, and then I think a union service could be arranged for at least once a

week, where all the Christians of the town could meet together for worship, and where those who do not want to subscribe to any of the church creeds could have a church home. The ministers of the town could arrange to preside and preach alternately."

"How would you go about such an arrangement?" asked Herbert.

"That, too, is a question in my mind; but I had thought of a conference of a few of the members of the different churches, including the pastors; and if the suggestion seems practical we can there lay our plans."

"O, I know the plan will work," exclaimed Ruth.

"I don't see how any Christian could object to it," said Mary.

"When would you think of calling such a conference?" asked Herbert.

"I have not considered the details of such an arrangement, Herbert," replied Mr. Rule; "and that is one reason I wanted to talk with you. What would you think of Thursday evening; that is, day after tomorrow?"

"I think it would be all right, Mr. Rule, I am sure," replied Herbert. "Where shall we meet?"

"I do not know. I think we could meet

right here, if desirable—could we not, Molly?” said Mr. Rule, addressing his wife.

“Why, yes, father; I am sure we shall all be glad to have the meeting here.”

“Who shall be invited to the conference?” askt Herbert.

“Well,” answered Mr. Rule, “I would suggest the pastors of the different churches and a few members probably, but I would suggest that only those be invited who we have reason to believe would be favorable to such a move. What do you think about it?”

“I think it a good idea. I look, however,” said Herbert, “for the greatest opposition from the ministers themselves.”

“Why so, Herbert?” askt Mr. Rule.

“Well, I should not have said that a short time ago; but since my talk with the pastors of the Methodist and the Presbyterian church, I am convinced that they will resist any move that would tend toward the organization of a church on the Bible alone.”

“How can they do that,” askt Mrs. Rule, “when they claim that their own doctrines are all taken from the Bible?”

“I think,” replied Herbert, “it is because they fear the teachings of the Bible in the face of some of their doctrines. Then, too, you know that Rev. Collins and Rev. Merlin are

not on the friendliest terms since their dispute some time ago on the street. But I am heartily in favor of the plan you suggest, Mr. Rule. I think, however, it will be best for you to invite the ministers, as you will have a greater influence with them. Who else shall be invited?"

"I think for each of us to invite such others as we desire will be best, though I believe a small number for the first conference will be preferable," answered Mr. Rule.

"Well, I suppose that is all for the present?" asked Herbert, glancing at the clock. "As it is getting a little late, I will be going. What will be the hour of the meeting?" he added, as he took his hat.

"I will say half past seven, if agreeable," answered Mr. Rule.

"Will it be all right for me to invite my parents?" asked Herbert, pausing, with his hand on the door-knob.

"Certainly, I shall be very glad to have them present."

"And," said Herbert, coloring the least perceptible shade, "would it be all right to invite Mr. Winnow's family?"

"Yes, indeed, Herbert, and any others you may desire," replied Mr. Rule.

"Yes, invite them," said Mrs. Rule, "both families are good friends of ours, and we shall be more than pleased to have them come."

"Thank you," said Herbert. "Good evening," and bowing he closed the door behind him.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FIRST CONFERENCE.

"But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."—Rom. 14:10.

It was Thursday evening, the time appointed for the conference. The large sliding doors between the sitting room and the parlor of Mr. Rule's handsome convenient residence had been opened, and the two rooms thrown into one. All invited were present, except the pastor of the United Brethren church, and he could not attend on account of a previous engagement. Those present were the pastors of the other three churches, the wife of the pastor of the Baptist church, Mr. Brown's family, Mr. Winnow's family, besides Mr. Rule's family and their married daughter and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Young. There was clearly considerable coldness and reserve among the members of the little conference; but this had been anticipated, and Mrs. Rule and her daughters put forth a special effort to make the half hour previous to the business

conference as pleasant and agreeable as possible. The clock had just struck eight.

"The object of this meeting," said Mr. Rule, elevating his voice slightly in order to attract the attention of all, and then lowering it to its usual tone, proceeded, "is to consider the question of a closer Christian fellowship, Christian union, or church federation, as may seem most advisable after consultation. I wish to thank you for your kind response to our invitation, and trust all will be free and unreserved in expressing your opinions. As for myself, I should be glad to see a real union of all the Christians of this community in one church. But if that is not thought possible or advisable, my second suggestion is to build a union church, where union services might be occasionally or regularly conducted by the pastors of the different churches, and where the Christians that do not belong to any of the churches might find a church home. I think I have made clear the object of the meeting, and now let us hear from others."

There was profound silence. A few significant glances were exchanged. The Baptist minister glanced at his wife. The Methodist and the Presbyterian minister, who happened to sit directly facing each other, exchanged glances, and with those glances much of their

former enmity, if not all, vanisht. Ah! the power,—the significance,—of a glance. What can convey the same love or hatred; encouragement or discouragement; comfort or misery; happiness or sorrow! What can more effectually lift the crushed, broken, down-trodden spirits of man; or more quickly quell and crush them! Mr. Rule had been a member of a number of bankers' associations and other business conferences, and had presided for years over the stockholders' and directors' meetings of the bank, but this was his first experience in a religious meeting. Though he had not expected all to fall in at once with his suggestion, yet the sentiment that he read unmistakably in the faces and glances that had greeted his announcement of the object of the meeting was a complete surprise to him. But he was not a man easily turned from his purpose, and, addressing the Baptist minister, he said:

"Rev. Bailey, what is your opinion in the matter?"

"Well, brethren and sisters," said the minister, speaking very slowly and deliberately, "this is an entirely new idea to me, and I can't say as I have any very definite idea or opinion. Of course I believe in cultivating a friendly relation among all the Christians

of a community, but as to the best way to do that I cannot say that I have any definite opinion."

"There are two propositions for consideration," said Mr. Rule; "one is that all the Christians of this community unite in one church, and worship and work together; the other is that we build a union church, where we may have union services, in addition to the regular services at the different churches, and where we could hold union revival meetings similar to the one we have had. Are you favorable to either of these propositions, Rev. Bailey?"

"I have not given the matter enough thought to be in position to commit myself at present."

"What is your opinion, Rev. Collins?" said Mr. Rule, turning toward the Presbyterian pastor.

"My opinion is that we have enough churches in this town already," replied the minister, curtly.

"Rev. Merlin," said Mr. Rule, turning from the Presbyterian to the Methodist minister.

"The other brethren have about expressed my sentiments," replied Rev. Merlin. "I might add, however, that I think such a move would be a jump backward of about a thousand years."

"If you had said nearly two thousand, I should be ready to agree with you," said Mr. Rule, unable to resist the temptation to retort.

A smile broke out on several faces as they saw the significance of Mr. Rule's reply.

"It seems to me," said Rev. Collins, "that instead of trying to organize another society, it would be much better and wiser to fall in with the churches we already have, and help and strengthen them."

"That is just my opinion," said the Baptist minister, "for we have all the churches now that this town is able to support."

"We have heard from the ministers," said Mr. Rule, after a moment's pause. "Let us hear from others. Herbert, we shall be glad to hear your opinion."

"I am just a beginner, and know so little about such matters," said Herbert, coloring and showing nervousness, "that my opinion will be worth very little. But I can answer for myself that the reason some do not fall in with the churches we already have and help them is because they cannot accept the church creeds."

"Can't accept any of them?" asked Rev. Merlin, abruptly.

"I cannot," answered Herbert, turning and

fixing his eyes steadily upon his uncouth questioner.

"I should think it would be a pretty particular kind of person that couldn't find a home in some of the churches, as many as he has here to choose from," said the big preacher, laughing and looking over the audience.

"I think it right that one should be particular in matters of religion and church," replied Herbert, firmly.

"May be you don't want to find a creed you can accept," said Rev. Merlin, half tauntingly.

"If I should answer that may be I do, our arguments would be equal," replied Herbert, with a wit that made his opponent perceptibly flinch. "I will not unite with any church whose creed will shut out other Christians, even though I believe its creed to be true. Nor do I believe the Bible gives authority to any church to do that."

"I am inclined to think," said Rev. Collins, glancing toward Herbert, "that this move is rather the outcome of a disposition on the part of a few restless spirits to criticise, than a real failure on their part to find a home in the churches."

Herbert's eyes sparkled and his lips parted to reply; but Mr. Rule's good judgment prevented, for he knew from the expression on

Herbert's face that the insinuating remarks of the minister would bring forth a cutting retort, and to prevent it he said before Herbert had time to answer,—

“It is not our object to discuss individual beliefs or opinions of the Bible this evening. The condition that confronts us is simply this: There are four or five different churches here, each holding to a certain code of doctrines, or faith. The majority of the professors of Christianity are members of these different churches. But there are a few who cannot conscientiously accept either of these creeds, and yet who desire a church home, who, I might add, prefer the Bible as their only creed. And besides this there is a very apparent necessity of a closer affiliation and sympathy among the members of the different churches.”

“You seem to be laboring under a false impression, Mr. Rule,” said Rev. Merlin, with an air of exaltation.

“I shall thank you for the correction,” replied Mr. Rule, modestly.

“You seem to think there is no church in this town that believes the Bible, judging from your remarks.”

“If in my awkwardness I left such an impression, I beg your pardon, I am sure,” re-

plied Mr. Rule. "What I wisht to say is, that each of the churches in this town has a creed, which it makes the test of admission, or of church fellowship, and that there are some who cannot accept either of those creeds, but who prefer to make the Bible the only test in such matters."

"You do not understand this matter," replied Rev. Merlin. "These creeds are simply briefer and more convenient statements of the doctrines taught in the Bible."

"I do not wish to discuss that matter here," said Mr. Rule, "as that is not the object of this meeting. We are confronted by facts substantially as I have stated them, and we are met to consider them."

"But," said Rev. Merlin, mistaking Mr. Rule's modest reluctance to discuss the issue between them for acknowledged inability to do so, "when you understand these matters you will find that you are evading the only real vital question at issue. Whatever a man believes is his creed, and the best place to get it is the Bible, and (as I have said) that is where the churches have gotten them, and it is not likely you will be able to improve much on the combined effort of the wisest men of the past two thousand years."

"If I must reply to you, Rev. Merlin," said Mr. Rule, with a calm decision which carried confidence with it, "I shall do it by asking you how it is possible that all these different church creeds are derived from the Bible, and yet many of them flatly contradict one another in various points?"

Rev. Merlin was entirely ignorant of the information and ability of the man he had forced to reply to him. Until the recent meeting he barely knew his name and face, and even now knew him only as an officer of the bank, and naturally supposed his ability confined to that profession. But he was quickly aroused from his mistaken impression by the pointed question put to him. Rev. Merlin started, opened his mouth as if to speak, then glanced nervously toward his fellow ministers, and then said,—

"I am not called upon to speak for others, but as for myself, I can say that I am very well satisfied with the creed of my church;—and if others are the same, that is, I think, sufficient."

All could but notice the discomfiture of the Methodist minister, but Mr. Rule, knowing that such discussion would only prevent the object he had in view, dropt it by saying,—

"Let us return to the subject under con-

sideration. Mr. Winnow, will you favor us with your opinion?"

"Well," said Mr. Winnow, in an easy, good-natured style, "I could tell you more about branding cattle. This is not in my line. The fact is I don't know what my own church creed is. I don't expect it's smart, either, for me to be telling it here before our parson;—I may get 'cut out' at the next 'round-up.' We read our Bible some; that is, my wife does, and I listen to her, or pretend to; and we go to church; and I try to live kind of decent, except when the cattle-market goes wrong; and that's about all the idea I have of religion. I have been wondering ever since I got here what I came here for. The fact is, I didn't want to come, but my wife brought me. If this assembly is in need of any information along the lines of round-ups or cattle brands or market reports, I shall be glad to tell you anything I know, but this is about the only line of theology I am much of an authority on. But," continued Mr. Winnow, seriously, after a moment's thoughtful pause, "I would like to say right here that I dislike this quarreling and fighting and back-biting among the churches, or rather among the members of the different churches, and anything that will put an end to it you may mark me down in

favor of. Regarding the plan you mention, I suppose from the way the preachers talk it is impossible, or at least impractical; but as I understand it, it would be something like the tent meetings, and I can say that was the best meeting I ever attended in my life. Anyway, Mr. Rule, if it should be decided to build a house for union service, I will give something toward it. As to starting another church here, while the town seems to be pretty well supplied, yet I think that those who may like another church better, have the same right to organize it that the other churches had to organize; and if you do it I think I shall give a little something toward that just to show my good will. In fact," he continued, turning toward the audience, "I think that any church that Mr. Rule might want to have built ought to get some support from the churches we already have, for I guess he has given more than has any one else toward building them."

Mr. Winnow's good-natured humor and his open, frank, practical remarks were most opportune, and his little speech had an excellent effect upon the audience. Mr. Rule's eyes twinkled with mirth at the amusing remarks of his old friend and customer; and several of the company laughed aloud.

"Mr. Brown," said Mr. Rule.

"I do not think my opinion in this matter would be worth much, but I should like to ask you a question," responded Mr. Brown.

"Certainly."

"If this plan should be carried out, and a church-house built, would it be just for the purpose of union services, or would it be your idea to organize another church?"

"Both propositions are before us," replied Mr. Rule. "I had thought that if all could agree to it, it would be well if all would drop their church creeds; that is, as tests of admission into the church,—of course they could hold them as individual opinions of the Bible,—and all unite in one body and one church."

"What would you make the basis of that church, and what the condition of membership?"

"My idea would be to make the Bible the basis, and a belief in it the only condition of membership."

"I cannot say that I am favorable or unfavorable to such a plan, but I should like to ask the ministers present what objections there could be to it."

"If I wanted to knock the religion of this neighborhood in the head, I cannot think of a better way to do it," said Rev. Merlin, his

face becoming decidedly red. "Such a church, if we could cail it that, would be a wishy-washy, back-boneless affair, without principle, power or prestige. Am I not right, brethren?" he added, turning toward the other ministers present. Both exprest their assent.

"All that you have said may be true," said Mr. Rule, "but you will pardon me for reminding you that you have furnisht us no proof of it."

"The proof is abundant," replied Rev. Merlin, "and can be produced at the proper time."

"Suppose for the present we abandon the first proposition," said Mr. Rule; "I should like an expression from those present on the second, which for convenience I will call church federation. I mean, the erection of a union building for union services."

Rev. Merlin nodded to Rev. Collins.

"For my part," said Rev. Collins, "it seems a pretty heavy burden to lay upon the churches of this community to require them to build such a house, especially for so little use, say one or two revival meetings a year. As to regular union services, I really can see no necessity for them, and for myself could not give the necessary time."

"May I ask you why you would not be will-

ing to devote a small portion of your time to that?" askt Mr. Rule.

"Well, in the first place, I am employed to look after the interests of the Presbyterian church in this place, and am supposed to devote my entire time to that; and in the second place, I can see no necessity for such services. Then I think the people would tire of going to so many services on Sunday, and would as a result slight some of them."

"Have any others anything to say?" askt Mr. Rule.

No one spoke. After a short pause, Mr. Brown said,—

"As for myself, I should like to think the matter over further, and consult again later."

"I think that probably best," said Mr. Rule, and the company began to break up.

Herbert and Theora were ready to start.

"Herbert, I just today heard of your little experience in Miller's 'joint,' and I want to congratulate you on your courage and manhood," said Mr. Rule, extending his hand.

"I appreciate your congratulation, Mr. Rule; but in honesty I am compelled to inform you that you are congratulating the wrong fellow. Uncle Tim Griggs is the man that showed the courage."

"Well, Uncle Tim is the one that told me

about it, and I guess he told it straight," replied Mr. Rule, smiling.

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Rev. Merlin and Rev. Collins were walking down the street together, talking earnestly. It was the first time they had more than spoken since their unfortunate dispute on the street. The events of the evening had furnished them matter of common interest, and caused them to forget all feeling against one another.

"That would be one of the most ridiculous undertakings ever heard of," said Rev. Merlin.

"I think I know what is at the bottom of the whole affair," said Rev. Collins.

"You do? What is it?"

"I think young Brown is. I am really surprised as well as grieved at the course that young man is taking. I had always looked upon him as altogether different from what he is recently proving himself to be. He is very presumptuous, not hesitating to place his own opinion against the opinion of the church."

"I discovered that this evening," replied the other, "and also in a little conversation I had with him several Sundays ago at the residence of Mr. Winnow.

"He asked for a conference with me several

evenings ago," said Rev. Collins, "pretending that he wanted light on certain doctrines; but when I began to explain them to him, I found that it was not light he wanted, but an opportunity to display his wisdom, or rather what he mistook for wisdom. By the way, I did not like Mr. Winnow's attitude this evening. I wouldn't be surprised if that young man has been using his influence there. I think you should look after that family carefully."

"I assure you I shall take care of them," replied Rev. Merlin, confidently; "and I would likewise caution you to look after the Brown family carefully."

"I shall call upon Bro. Brown tomorrow," replied Rev. Collins. "I am not at all afraid of Sister Brown, for she is strong in the faith, but I am aware that Bro. Brown will require attention, and I shall see to it. In fact, until this little wind blows over, I think we should all watch our flocks carefully."

"I fully agree with you," said the other, "and I think likely a little co-operation may prove mutually advantageous."

"No doubt. Might it not be well to mention the matter to Rev. Goodwin, as he was not there tonight?"

"I think so," said Rev. Merlin, "I will call on him in the morning. Good-night."

“Good-night, Brother Merlin.”

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The last of the company had gone. Mr. Rule was standing at the door, looking out in deep meditation. He turned and walkt once or twice across the room, and then, thrusting his hands into his pockets, he stopt suddenly in the middle of the room, and turned directly facing his wife, and said,—

“I never before would have believed that the ministry of the nineteenth century contained so much downright cowardice, deception and hypocrisy.”

CHAPTER X.

THE CRUSADE.

"Who hath wounds without a cause?"—Prov. 23:29.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Adams; I was just going to the crusade, and I wondered if you wouldn't like to go along."

"Why, I hadn't thought of it; but I am sure if I can do any good I shall be glad to go. But I won't have time to get ready, will I? I shall have to comb my hair and change my dress."

"O yes, it is nearly half an hour yet before they meet at the church, and even if we do not get there until they are ready to start it will be all right. I shall be glad to wait for you. I knew you were interested, and thought you would go."

"O yes, I would do anything in my power against this awful business. You know what it has cost me, Mrs. Albert,—my husband, and now my poor dear boy,—and the careworn face was troubled, and the tired eyes looked away into the distance, as they filled with tears. "Yes, I'll be ready in a few minutes," she added, as she went into the bedroom.

Mrs. Albert glanced around the plain, poorly furnisht, tho clean, little room. She knew it was the best room in the house, and yet if her own kitchen were not a hundred times better finisht and furnisht she would be a very dissatisfied house-keeper. She thought, too, of how hard Mrs. Adams had to work, how shabbily she had to dress, of how little she sought society, or was sought by it;—and after all, the only object of her enduring and suffering all this, the only thing she seemed to live for, was a debauched, worthless, and now hopeless drunkard. Her sad words were still ringing in Mrs. Albert's ears,—“You know what it has cost me, Mrs. Albert,—my husband, and now my poor, dear boy.” Then she thought of her own handsome, convenient, comfortable, well-furnisht home, of her sober husband and children, of her rank in society. And then a shadow past over her handsome face, as she remembered how often she had clouded the light of her own home by spells of modiness or ill-temper, how often she had marred the happiness of her children by cross words, how often she had ruffled the feelings of her husband when she could have soothed them instead. She thought to herself, How grateful that poor woman would be for but one of the hundred blessings I have! Ah! the

unbounded, almost unbearable, joy it would bring to her sad heart could she but have the assurance that her only boy, tho wreckt and almost ruined already by drink, would never again touch the vile stuff. She was roused from her sad musings by the re-entrance of Mrs. Adams.

"Have I kept you waiting long?" askt Mrs. Adams, glancing at the little clock on the shelf; and then glancing at the pretty ruffles and the costly fabric of the handsomely fitting dress of her visitor, her eyes dropt involuntarily to her own plain, tho neatly fitting calico dress, and she added, half ashamed, "I don't expect this dress is hardly good enough to wear on such an occasion."

"O yes, it is," replied the other, quickly, "it's good enough for anybody," and as she said it, somehow she felt in her heart a longing to throw her arms around the little woman and ask her forgiveness,—she knew not for what, but there was a strange feeling of guilt that clung to her, a feeling that she had some way wronged the little woman before her.

"Well, I am ready," said Mrs. Adams, and they walkt out into the street; "will there be many in the crusade?"

"I think there will be a goodly number to-day," replied her companion. "Last Saturday

there was quite a falling off in the number, but Brother Merlin requested that each of us try to bring some one with us today, and I look for quite a number."

"By the way, where is Jake today?" asked Mrs. Albert, after walking some little distance in silence.

"He is working at the Talbot Ranch; at least, I think so. When he left early this morning, he said he was not sure they would want him, but if they didn't he would be back, and he has not come back; so I suppose he is working there."

"What a pity he didn't go into the church; I believe he would have lived up to his profession if he had."

"Yes, I think so too; I tried hard to get him into the church, but it seemed everything was against him," answered Mrs. Adams, sadly.

"Why, how was that, Mrs. Adams?" asked Mrs. Albert, with deep interest.

"Well, Jake got turned against the churches; and then it seemed the more any one talked to him about it the more he got turned against them."

"Against all of them?"

"Well, yes; but mainly against the Presbyterian. You see, that was the one we thought most of joining."

"But if you couldn't go into that, why not come into the Methodist? I think that would really be the best church for him, anyway, for it is very apparent that the Methodist church is the most openly opposed to the liquor business, which would naturally make it a better and safer place for him. Brother Merlin says that the Methodist church is everywhere the most openly opposed to the saloon."

"Well, we didn't know what to do. I tried to do the best I could. Some told me one thing and some another. But it's too late now," and a deeply troubled expression came over her face, as they entered the Methodist church.

Only a few were present, but by the time appointed for the meeting, half past two o'clock, there were about twelve or fifteen women and the Methodist pastor, who was the only man present. A temperance song was sung. The minister then read a portion of the twenty-third chapter of Proverbs. He then made a short address, in which he spoke enthusiastically upon the important work of the "Crusade," and dwelt at some length upon the great sacrifice and bravery of the crusaders. He closed the meeting with a short prayer, after which the company formed into line, two abreast, and marched out of the build-

ing and down the side-walk. The windows of the first "joint" they reacht on their route were curtained, and a sour, sickening smell of beer greeted their nostrils as they approacht. Without halting they walkt in. Rev. Merlin stept up boldly and dignifiedly before the proprietor, a small, one-eyed, measly looking specimen of humanity, and said loud enough to be heard by all,—

"My friend, we should like to hold a short service here, by your permission."

"All right, parson," responded the other, grinning and winking at the men at the bar.

A temperance song was sung, and the minister led in a long and fervent prayer, at intervals of which the women responded with "amens." On account of so much filth and spittle on the floor, the crusaders stood during the prayer. Two or three of the roughest young fellows joined in hearty "amens" with the crusaders, much to the merriment of the others. The prayer ended, the crusaders filed out in the same order they had entered.

The next place they visited was "Bill" Miller's place, with which the reader is already familiar. This "joint" was located in the middle of a block, on one corner of which was the First National Bank, and on the other corner Mr. Brown's fine general store. Just as the

company past the bank they met Herbert Brown, who was going in to deposit the day's receipts. He lifted his hat and spoke pleasantly to the different members of the company as he past. As they approacht the "joint" they heard much loud talking and laughing. Miller's place was known to be the leading saloon in the town, and did more business than the other two combined. Owing to the narrowness of the door, the crusaders entered single file, and when their leader reacht the counter opposite the burly proprietor, not more than half the company were yet inside. Mrs. Adams, who had been assigned a position at the extreme rear of the line of march, did not enter until after the leader had announced their business, which he did in about the same words as before. Half a dozen men were at the bar, and their glasses were just being filled. On previous occasions, Miller had treated the crusaders with more than his usual courtesy. In fact, as he had several times remarkt, he had been enjoying their visits. But it was becoming a little old; and then, too, it was contrary to his nature to allow anyone to assume even apparent authority over him, which the demeanor and tone of the minister suggested. And so, assuming an affected indifference, he replied,—

"Jest wait a little bit, parson, till these men are through; then ye kin have a few minutes fur yer meetin'."

"Very well," replied the minister, stepping back, somewhat abasht, while the other members of the company were collecting around him.

At least a part of those at the bar were already much under the influence of liquor. There was among them a familiar face; but it seemed that none of them, not even the minister, who was a moment ago very close to them, recognized it. The glasses were filled, and the drinkers were just reaching to take them, when Mrs. Adams reacht the line of the crusaders. She was looking toward the men at the bar. Suddenly her eyes flasht, her face became wild, and extending her arms she rusht with a wild scream toward the bar. It was the first time in her life she had seen Jake taking a drink of liquor. She thought he was out of town today, and the unexpected sight of him, the drunkest in that drunken group of men, reaching for a glass of that hellish liquid, had maddened her almost beyond control.

"You fiend, that would ruin my boy!" she cried, rushing forward and seizing Jake and trying to push him back from the bar, while

with one quick stroke she sent glasses, pitcher and beer all rattling, splashing, crashing across the floor.

For an instant all stood spell-bound, except Mrs. Adams, who was frantically trying to drag her drunken boy away from the bar. But it was only an instant until "Bill" Miller realized what had happened, and indignant rage seized him.

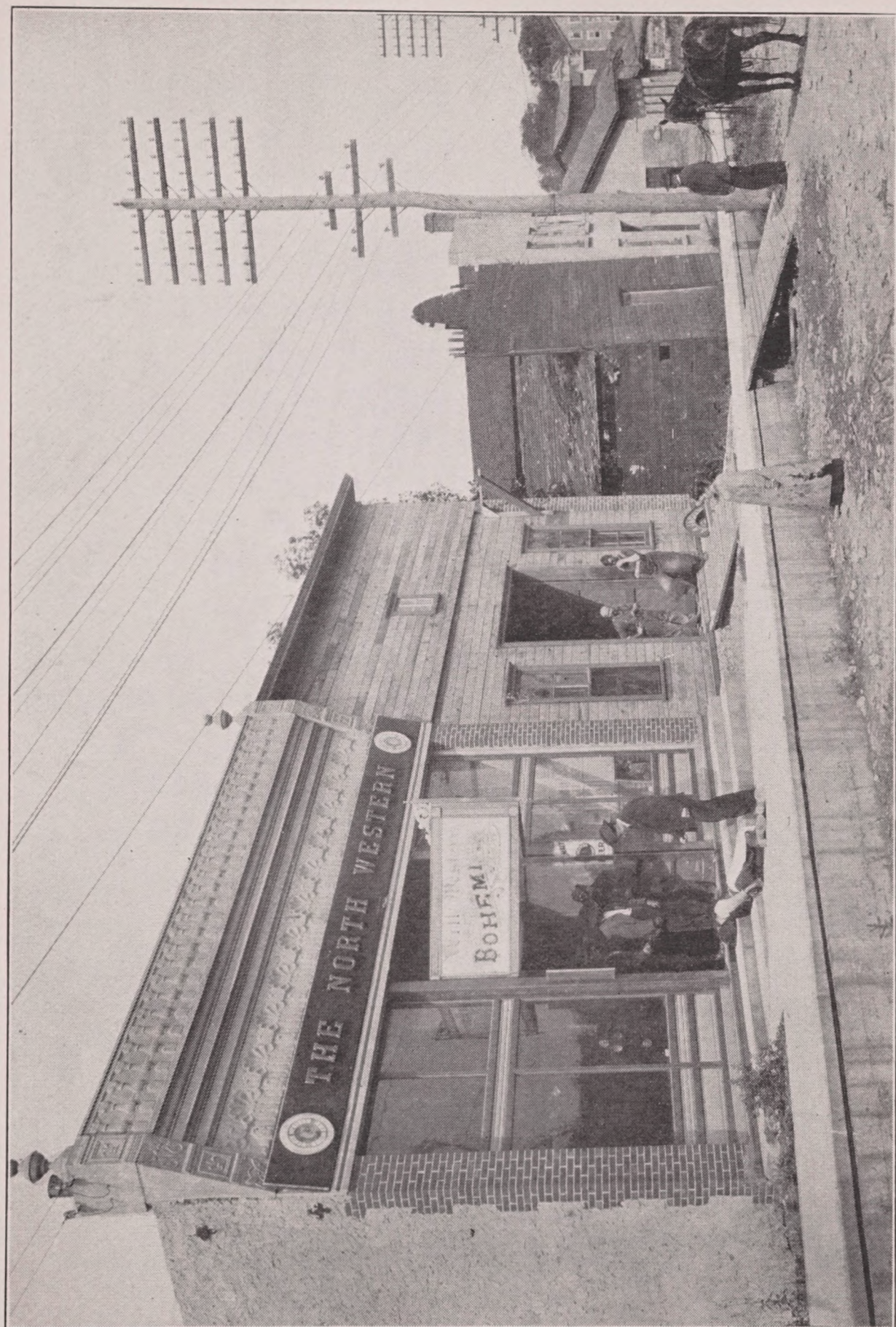
"D—n you," he shouted, as he leapt over the bar, and, seizing the frail little woman by the shoulders, started with her toward the door. She struggled frantically to free herself from the powerful grip of the giant. Several of the women started to her rescue, but Rev. Merlin stepped quickly before them and put out his hand, partly to hold them back and partly as a gesture of command. The enraged "joint"-keeper, mistaking the minister's efforts to keep back the members of his company for an attempt to interfere, suddenly lost the grip of his right hand on the little, helpless woman, and holding her in the clutch of his left, turned quickly facing the minister, his clenched right hand drawn back in readiness to strike.

"Stand back, you d—d hypocrite!" he shouted. Rev. Merlin stepped back quickly to avoid the expected blow.

"I beg your pardon," said the minister, considerably confused. "I was only preventing others from interfering. I assure you it was no part of our plan to destroy your property, and I am truly sorry it has happened."

The big saloon-keeper did not wait to hear the explanation, but before the minister had finished his apology, he had roughly rushed the offender out of the building and let her go with a shove that sent her light form almost off the sidewalk. As they burst suddenly out of the door onto the sidewalk, they barely escaped a collision with Herbert Brown, who was just returning from the bank, walking rapidly. Herbert stopped suddenly and shrunk back to avoid the collision. When the angry brute let go of his helpless victim, he was standing directly in front of Herbert. Their eyes met and fixed upon each other. The same feeling that had overwhelmed him a few evenings ago as he stood facing the bully in his joint seized Herbert Brown, and the scene he had just witnessed of the big ruffian, of more than two hundred pounds, so roughly and rudely thrusting out the frail little woman, who would have weighed barely half as much, had only intensified that feeling, and maddened him. Like a flash, the strong right hand of Herbert was drawn to his shoulder, and with

the swiftness almost of a bullet and the weight of a sledge-hammer it went straight to the jaw of the bully. Miller, who had not had time fully to turn fronting his antagonist, went backward under the heavy blow, tript and fell. He caught himself on his hand and sprang to his feet, fairly shouting oaths and imprecations, and rusht at his foe. Herbert had not moved from his position. Tho he was much lighter than his opponent, yet he was by no means a small man, for his weight was over a hundred and seventy pounds, and every pound of flesh in him was muscle, and every ounce of his heart was courage, and at that moment he was every inch the fighter. Tho indignant and fiercely angry, yet his thoughts were never clearer. He realized that his advancing enemy was almost a giant in both weight and strength, and that fighting was a part of his business. Tho Herbert Brown had never before struck a man in rage, yet he was by no means unacquainted with the "manly art"; and now he watcht every movement of his advancing opponent. Miller rusht at him with the fury of an enraged beast, and the instant he was within reach struck with his powerful right hand straight at the face of Herbert with a force sufficient to bring down a much heavier man than the one before



HERBERT'S LEFT HAND SWUNG WITH A FEARFUL SWIFTNESS, AND LANDED WITH A CRASHING BLOW
ON THE POINT OF THE RUFFIAN'S JAW.

him. Herbert's quick ready left hand caught the blow of his enemy and carried it from its course, and the bully's swift hand past to the left of Herbert's face and over his shoulder. At the same instant Herbert sent his clenched right hand with even greater force than before straight to the unguarded face of the bully. The blood spurted from the mouth and nose, and the big ruffian staggered backward. Before he had time to regain himself, Herbert's left hand swung with a fearful swiftness and landed with a crashing blow on the point of the ruffian's jaw, and the big form of Bill Miller went backward, and fell at full length and heavily upon the walk. Herbert followed, and now stood waiting for his enemy to rise. But by this time a crowd had collected, and as the bully rose, cursing, a number of men caught him, and others laid hold of Herbert.

"You needn't hold me," said Herbert, "he has only to keep his distance. It is a busy day at the store, and if I am not longer needed here I will be going."

Bill Miller, bleeding, panting, swearing, struggling, was led back into his "joint."

CHAPTER XI.

A NEW ACQUAINTANCE.

"Receive ye one another as Christ also received us, to the glory of God."—Rom. 15:7.

Ding-dong, ding-dong, pisch-h-h-h-h, and "Number 4" stopt at the depot at Sandpre. Herbert Brown, looking in at the car windows, saw that the coaches were crowded. About as many got on as off; and as many of those getting on were ladies, Herbert waited until the others were on before he entered the car. He was starting to St. Louis to buy goods for the store. This was his first trip for this purpose alone, tho in company with his father he had made one such trip before. Herbert walkt along the aisle looking for a seat, but found none until he had nearly reacht the other end of the car. The seat by the side of the vacant one and next the window was occupied by a young man apparently twenty-five or thirty years of age, tall and rather slender, jet-black hair, and drest in a suit of black. His arm rested on the window sill, and in his hand he held an open Bible, in the reading of

which he seemed deeply interested. Herbert hesitated to interrupt him, and lookt on toward the end of the car to see if there were not another seat, but saw none.

"Excuse me," said Herbert; "is this seat taken?"

The one addrest lookt up quickly, turning to Herbert a smooth-shaven face of extraordinary intelligence. The dark eyes, tho gentle, were piercing, and the mouth and the lines about it indicated the orator. There was in the face a courteousness combined with a positive, fearless expression, which especially attracted Herbert's attention.

"I think not. There was a gentleman occupying it, but I think he got off at the last station." The voice was a clear, strong silver tone, and had that peculiar attribute of carrying with it a conviction of the honesty of the speaker. He spoke with an open frankness that to Herbert was very pleasing.

"The train is considerably crowded," said Herbert.

"Yes," replied his companion; "it seems that at each stop about as many get on as off. That was Sandpre we just past, was it not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is that your home?"

"Yes, sir."

"I noticed from the papers, you had quite a revival there last fall."

"Yes, we had a good meeting."

"Rev. Greedor, I think, was the evangelist?"

"Yes, sir; are you acquainted with him?"

"I have met him once. He conducted a very successful meeting in my town about a year ago."

"How did you like him?"

"Very well; only I do not like his financial system. He is making a fortune out of the ministry. I do not think a minister has either a moral or a scriptural right to take more than a reasonable compensation for his services. He held a three weeks' meeting in our town, and received nearly a thousand dollars."

"What do you consider his chief element of success?" askt Herbert.

"Well, he is a man of considerable ability, tho I do not think pre-eminent; but I think his chief element of success is his having no church relation, or, if he has, keeping it unknown. Such men as he are reaping a rich financial harvest from the sowing of sectarianism. How many churches have you in your town?"

"Five; that is, four besides the Catholic, which took no part in the meeting."

"May I ask you what denominations?"

"The Methodist, the Presbyterian, the Baptist and the United Brethren."

"If I am not too inquisitive, may I ask you if you are a member of either of them?"

"Yes,—or—or—yes," said Herbert. He had no desire whatever to hide anything, but the question came so unexpectedly that he was conscious he had answered very awkwardly, and in spite of himself he felt the color coming to his face.

His questioner looked at him with a puzzled expression, the slightest smile of amusement playing about his mouth. Herbert was half angry at himself, for he could not imagine why he should have answered in such a manner. Why didn't he say *yes*, and stop?

"I see you are amused at my awkward answer," said Herbert, "and I suppose I shall have to explain. I was converted during the meeting of which you inquire. I joined a church before I knew its doctrine, and, since I have learned it find I cannot accept it, and so expect to withdraw from it. Tho I am still nominally a member, I can hardly say I am really."

"I see," said his companion; "and now that my curiosity is aroused, if you do not object to questions, I wish to ask you a few more."

"I am sure I have no objections," replied Herbert. "Go on."

"I should like to ask you what church you are, or were, a member of?"

"The Presbyterian."

"If you leave it, what church will you join?"

"That, I do not know."

"Will it be one of the other churches in your town?"

"No; I cannot conscientiously join any of them."

"Why?"

"I do not believe any of their creeds, and even if I did I would not join them."

"What church would you join, if it were convenient?"

"I never heard of one that I would join, tho there may be such."

Herbert's companion became interested, and closing his Bible, laid it on his knee, and turned partly facing him.

"May I ask you what kind of a church would suit you?"

"Well, if I should tell you, it would no doubt seem to you ridiculous, as it has seemed to other ministers, to whom I have told it. I am assuming that you are a minister?"

"Yes, sir."

"My idea is that there ought to be only one

church, and that it should be so organized and governed as to include all Christians."

"What would be the creed of such a church?"

"The book you have there," replied Herbert, pointing to the Bible.

"I am certainly glad to meet one holding your views, more especially since you have reached them independently, and in spite of strong, adverse influences," said Herbert's companion, extending his hand. "My name is Powers,—Oscar Powers."

"My name is Herbert Brown," replied Herbert, taking the proffered hand. "May I ask you of what church you are a minister?"

"I am pastor of a church at Golden."

"I mean, of what denomination are you?" asked Herbert.

"I was until recently a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, but am at present a member of no recognized denomination."

"I judge you have had an interesting experience, Rev. Powers," said Herbert, much interested; "would you object to relating it?"

"It has not been so interesting, probably, but to me it has been a very trying experience. I hardly know where to begin," said the young minister, thoughtfully.

"I should like to hear it all," said Herbert. "Begin at the first."

"Well, I was one that was born into the church," said the minister; "that is, my parents were Methodists, and I was baptized, as they called it,—though in fact simply sprinkled, when I was an infant, and received into full membership when I was a child. I was not converted, however, until I was twenty-one years old, after I had taken a course in college in preparation for my chosen profession. After I was converted, I felt it was my duty to preach; and I went back to college for two years longer to fit myself for the ministry. I did some preaching while attending college, and the third year after I left college I was assigned to the pastorate of the church at Golden, a strong church of over three hundred members, with a salary of eight hundred dollars. But from the time I began studying for the ministry, I found things in the doctrines of the church that I did not believe were warranted by Scripture. I took the matter to the presiding elder, and he advised me to let those things alone and go on preaching the Gospel, remarking that the mission of the Methodist church was the winning of souls rather than the teaching of doctrines. My professor of New Testament Greek gave me the

same advice, and even acknowledged that he did not believe all the doctrines of his church. Well, that, after a manner, satisfied me, and I suppose that, had it not been for circumstances that occurred in my church a little over a year ago, I should today, like the majority of the ministers in that and other creed churches, be using my efforts to build up a church whose creed I believed to be contrary to the Bible I was preaching."

"Do you really think, Rev. Powers, that the ministers in those churches do not believe their creeds?" asked Herbert, in surprise.

"I positively know that many do not."

"I do not see how they could preach effectively," said Herbert; "it seems to me they would carry a sort of feeling of guilt."

"They do, and it is impossible for them to preach so effectively. That greatest of all the speaker's forces is gone—the power of honest conviction."

"What were the circumstances that occurred in your church, to which you refer, Rev. Powers?"

"Well, the first year after I took charge of the church at Golden, I held a month's revival meeting, and the Lord blest the efforts wonderfully, for there were over a hundred and fifty converts. Most of the younger converts

came promptly into the church; that is, were received on probation, and some went into other churches in the town; but there were among the converts a number of men and women of middle age or past, among them business men and others of education and ability, who required to know what the church stood for before uniting with it. I was called upon to explain to them the doctrines of the church. Many questions were askt me, some of them regarding the very doctrines I did not believe were warranted by Scripture? I was askt by one very intelligent man why, if I considered these doctrines essential, I did not preach them during the revival. I was in a dilemma; on the one hand I dare not acknowledge my disbelief in the creed of my church, as that would be inconsistent with my position; and on the other hand I was determined not to tell those seeking the truth a falsehood. I went to my room. I scarcely left it during the week. I spent the week in meditation, in searching the Scriptures and in prayer. That was the darkest week in my experience. I fought in that room alone the hardest battle of my life. On the one hand were duty, truth, honesty of conviction; on the other were position, salary, esteem of my brother ministers, my family and my friends,

and consistency of life before the world. At one time I resolved to make an open confession before my congregation; but censuring look of my members, my next visit to my old home, a heresy trial, the condemnation of my brother ministers, and the inconsistency of my life stood up before me like a threatening, hideous monster, and I trembled and shrunk back. Again I thought of dismissing the whole matter and going on as I had been doing, but my conscience stood up before me like a prophet of God and pointed the finger of judgment into my face and denounced me as a deceiver and a liar, and threatened me with no more comfort or peace of mind. And again I determined to resign my position and quit the ministry, but my conscience denounced me as a coward, and the cloud that had settled over me became only the blacker. The only counselors I had were my conscience, my God and the Bible, and they seemed all against me. I knew there must be something wrong with the church that could not furnish a home for its converts. I kept asking myself the question: Would Christ be pastor of such a church? What would He do in my place? And the answer seemed to come back the same every time—and I would start as if to follow, and then I would tremble and shrink

back for lack of courage. The week had past thus. The lady with whom I was boarding had very kindly tried to tempt my appetite with delicate dishes, but I had eaten very little and slept very little. I had not gone down to dinner at all. It was Saturday afternoon, and I was tired and exhausted under the burden that had been upon me, and lay on my couch in my room, deprest, discouraged. I had prepared no discourse for the morrow. In my condition of mind it was impossible. To go before my audience tomorrow (I knew the house would be full to overflowing) and unburden my soul by a full, open and complete confession—I could not do it; and to go into the pulpit and try to deliver another sermon without it seemed to me the blackest crime. No felon ever lay in his cell awaiting his execution with gloomier forebodings, a sadder heart or more downcast spirits than I lay there awaiting the coming of the next Sabbath day. From the depths of my anguish I cried out, “O my God, deliver me from these bonds and let me go!” and immediately there came the answer, “The truth shall make you free,” and it lighted up my soul—it was a light from heaven breaking in upon the blackest night. It seemed to me that the very room was lighted up, and I sprang up from my couch ready

to shout for joy, but instead I fell upon my knees and offered thanks. That dark week of travail had brought forth liberty of conscience, and with it courage of conviction," the minister paused, a tear glistening in his eye. Herbert had listened with rapt attention.

"You certainly had a remarkable and very trying experience, Rev. Powers," said Herbert.

"I account that week the most important and valuable in all my life, and I would not take all the world for that experience."

"But how about your sermon, and what followed?" asked Herbert.

"Well, I never prepared a sermon so easily as I did that. I never had Scripture come to my mind so readily. When I went before my audience the next morning, the house was crowded to overflowing, for the interest was great just after the meeting we had had, but when I looked into the expectant faces of the crowd the Tempter again stood before me, and for a moment my courage failed; and for the first time in my life I knelt down upon the platform in silent prayer before my audience, and when I rose the Tempter was gone. I made a clean breast of the whole matter, and as I made my confession before that large audience it seemed that almost every eye was

wet with tears of sympathy, and when I had sat down, so great was the surprise that they sat like they were spell-bound, and when I turned to the choir and told them to sing, the organist started like one awakened from a dream. I askt them to consider the matter until the evening service, when I should speak again of the same subject. And after the evening service, I askt for a business meeting the next afternoon. It was largely attended, not only by my own congregation, but by numbers from other churches as well. To my utter surprise, it seemed that there was no dissension at all in my congregation. I had put the proposition by asking whether we should hold to these old man-made doctrines that were shutting out many of the souls that had been converted in answer to our prayers, or should we cast them to the winds and lay hold upon the Word of God, which all could accept and believe, and thus offer a home to all that had accepted Christ. Inasmuch as the church at that place had been built exclusively from funds raised in the community, it was thought but fair that we request that the new organization be allowed to retain it, and I was authorized to write the presiding elder regarding the matter. The result was the presiding elder came by the first train. It was Dr.

Windfelt, the same minister to whom I had confest my lack of faith in the creed of the church when I had first begun studying for the ministry. He first tried moral suasion by pointing out to me the great opportunities there were in the great church I was leaving, and reminding me of the loss of friends and opportunity my course would entail. Finding that would not accomplish his end, he resorted to threats, and finally ended by canceling my pastorate. He arrived on Wednesday, and that evening took charge of the prayer meeting, and announced that he would fill the pulpit the next Sabbath. To be brief, the result was that with the combined effort of the presiding elder and a bishop all but about one hundred of the members and quite a number of the new converts were held in the Methodist church; but with them and a few from the other churches I went ahead and organized an independent church, with the Bible as our only creed, and Christ as our only head; and we have now completed a new building. Of course I was denounced as an heretic and a traitor, etc.; but I feel that if either title belonged to me, it was before and not after this action."

"You ought to put that story into print, Rev. Powers; it would read like a romance,

and then it is information that the world ought to have. I suppose you have not so strong a church as you had before you left the Methodist?"

"O, no; tho we have now a membership of nearly two hundred."

Herbert Brown and Rev. Powers continued in the most interested conversation. Herbert told him of their little conference at Sandpre, and of their other experiences. They did not realize that the train had sped over about seventy-five miles of smooth track until it suddenly blew a loud, long whistle, and the minister, glancing quickly out of the window, said:

"That's for my home," at the same time reaching for his valise.

"Rev. Powers, would it be possible for you to visit our town in the near future? I should like to have you meet some of our people, especially Mr. Rule."

"Why, yes; I could visit you most any time that did not conflict with my regular appointments," answered the minister, as they stepped off the train onto the platform.

"Then I should like for you to visit us next Monday evening. That is the time of our next conference, and I should like for you to meet

with us. I will write you regarding it as soon as I get back home, but I am sure we shall want you to meet with us."

"A-l-l-l-l ab-o-o-ord," shouted the conductor.

"Rev. Powers," said Herbert, turning and grasping his hand warmly, "I cannot express to you the pleasure and benefit I have received by this short and accidental acquaintance."

"Thank you," responded the minister earnestly, "and I can assure you that your experience has been food to my soul and a new inspiration to me. I trust you will have a pleasant and profitable journey. Good-bye."

"Good-bye, Rev. Powers," said Herbert, as he sprang lightly upon the step of the moving car.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SECOND CONFERENCE.

"Every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided?"—I Cor. 1:12, 13.

"Well, are you ready to go to the ecumenical council," askt Rev. Merlin, laughing, as the door of the Presbyterian parsonage opened in response to his knock.

"Just as soon as I get my hat and coat," replied Rev. Collins, laughing in turn at the wit of his brother minister. "Will you come in?"

"O no, thanks; I'll wait here."

"I think the proper thing to do is to nip this thing in the bud; and if I have opportunity this evening, I think I shall express myself in no uncertain terms," said Rev. Collins, turning his coat collar up to protect his neck and ears against the sharp, frosty air.

"I have regretted since the last meeting," replied the other, "that I did not speak more pointedly and emphatically against this thing. Why, it's heresy, Brother Collins, heresy! nothing but heresy! They may call it what they will, but it's heresy just the same!"

"Of course it's heresy, of the worst sort. If denying the orthodox faith is not heresy, what

is heresy? That is just what I told Brother Brown's family yesterday, and that is just what I called it—*heresy*."

"How did you find Mr. Brown's family?"

"Well, Herbert, of course, is hopeless, and I was very glad he was not at home when I called. Brother Brown is reserved, but I think Sister Brown is sound. I made matters very clear, and shall trust the Lord for results."

"I find I have a pretty serious case on my hands at Brother Winnow's," said Rev. Merlin.

"Mr. Winnow, I suppose?"

"Well, no; Brother Winnow will not leave his wife, and I feel pretty sure of her stability. Their daughter, Theora, is a far more serious case."

"There is some more of the poisoning influence of the heretical views of that young man," said Rev. Collins, with an emphatic gesture of the hand. "What a shame that she should be led astray, for Theora Winnow is certainly a jewel."

"You are exactly right; and I assure you that I talkt to her very pointedly in the matter. I told her plainly in the presence of her mother that it was her duty as a Christian to sever her engagement with that young man, and 'be not unequally yoked together with un-

believers'; that if he cared more for his heretical views than he did for her, he was not worthy of her; and that there was not a shadow of a question as to her duty in the matter. I think my words reacht their mark, too, for I left her crying."

"I trust so, and that good may result," said Rev. Collins, as they stept up to the door of Mr. Rule's residence.

"Good-evening, good-evening," said Mr. Rule, bowing to each of the ministers in turn, as they entered; and placing his hand on the arm of Rev. Collins, who was in advance, he conducted him across the room (Rev. Merlin following) to where Rev. Powers was seated.

"Rev. Powers, allow me to introduce to you Rev. Collins, the pastor of the Presbyterian church. Rev. Powers is a Christian minister."

"I am glad to meet you, Rev. Powers," said the Presbyterian pastor, bowing and extending his hand.

"Thank you," responded the other, taking the offered hand.

"And Rev. Merlin, the pastor of the M. E. church, Rev. Powers," said Mr. Rule.

"Rev. Merlin, I am pleased to form your acquaintance."

"And I am glad to meet you, Mr. Powers."

"I will just say," said Mr. Rule, after the ministers were seated, "that we had begun discussing the subject for consideration. In order that there might be no confusion or misunderstanding we have decided to discuss first the subject of Christian union, or of one church. Rev. Bailey was speaking, and will now proceed."

"As I was just saying," said Rev. Bailey, "I do not intend to throw anything in the way of this move. My church is not strong enough to support a pastor. My term will be out in a short time, and I have engaged to go elsewhere, and I shall be very glad for the sake of the members of my charge here if some such arrangements can be made. When the plan was first suggested, at the other meeting here, I thought I was opposed to it, but after thinking it over and talking it over with some of our members, I feel more favorably inclined; and should the plan be carried out, I think I shall advise my church to go into it."

"I think," said Rev. Merlin, emphatically, "that you would do a far better part by your church, Brother Bailey, by advising them to go into some orthodox church that has some standing, and knows what it stands for; I think I understand this whole scheme, including the presence of this young brother," con-

tinued Rev. Merlin, with a wave of his hand and a condescending nod toward Rev. Powers. "It is simply an attempt to organize another church here, and all this union talk is for no other purpose than to proselyte. If there are two or three here who cannot worship in an orthodox church let them get off to themselves and form a little society of their own, but not try to proselyte from the orthodox churches."

Rev. Merlin's remarks created a perceptible stir. Rev. Powers listened attentively to every word, but did not by his features or otherwise show approval or disapproval. Even the personal reference of the Methodist minister received no response in his features, unless it may have been the slightest shade of coloring in his face for an instant.

"I wish to assure all present," said Mr. Rule, "that there is no scheme whatever, and that there are no plans of which I am aware further than those that have been discussed at these meetings."

"It seems to me," said Herbert Brown, indignantly, glancing at the Methodist pastor, "that the rules of common courtesy would forbid insinuations toward a visiting minister until there were at least some grounds for them. Rev. Powers is here at my own solicitation,

and, if his presence is a crime, the guilt is mine, not his. I accidentally fell into his company, and learned that he had recently had an experience along exactly the same lines we are working here, and I should like to have him relate his experience."

"I know all will be pleased and profited if you will favor us with an account of your experience, Rev. Powers," said Mr. Rule.

Rev. Powers recited the account of his experience in substance as he had related it to Herbert on the train, omitting only the part that related to his own personal experience and not mentioning the presiding elder's name. He spoke in a clear, full, silver tone, unaffected and charming. He had the rapt attention of his hearers. As he proceeded, Rev. Merlin's face colored deeply, and he became restless. Once or twice during the narration his lips parted as if to interrupt the speaker.

"I know all about you, young man," said Rev. Merlin, as soon as the visiting minister had closed, "and I am happy to be in a position to warn this people and community against you and against your heretical doctrines. Dr. Windfelt, a presiding elder of the Methodist church, has told me all about you. He branded you both traitor and heretic, and

I have no reason to question his judgment."

"Dr. Windfelt is in an excellent position to know whereof he speaks," replied the other, with a calmness and self control that to the Methodist pastor was provoking and to the rest of the audience admirable; "for he is the one that deposed me at Golden, and also the one to whom I went, when I first began to study for the ministry, for advice regarding the doctrines of the church that I failed to find in the Bible, and it was he that advised me to remain in the church and to pay no attention to those things."

"Why were you in the Methodist church if you didn't believe its doctrines?" asked the Methodist minister, fiercely.

"I shall be pleased to answer your question twice, Rev. Merlin. I would answer it first by saying that, like the great majority of the members of that church, I was born into it. My parents were members, and when I was an infant I was sprinkled, and was taught afterward that I had been baptized; and while I was a child too young to understand what the doctrines meant, I was taught to answer 'yes' to the questions asked me, and I was received into the church. I will again answer your question by asking you a question: Why

do you hold a creed that will bar Christians from membership?"

"I am not aware than any *Christians* have ever been barred from membership in the Methodist church."

"Then how about your presiding elder, who advised me to remain in the church when he knew that I did not believe its doctrines? Was he advising one whom he knew was not a Christian to remain in the church? The professor of New Testament Greek, to whom I referred a moment ago, acknowledged to me that the Bible contradicted the Methodist mode of baptism, that it nowhere taught the doctrine of 'Probation', and that he did not believe the doctrine of the 'Trinity' as set forth in the Methodist 'Articles of Religion'. He is now a bishop in your church. Do you want us to believe that some of your bishops are not Christians?"

"I have no reason to believe the statements you are making are true," said Rev. Merlin, pugnaciously. "It will be time enough to consider that matter after evidence of their truth has been produced."

"I acknowledge your ground is well taken, and I concede the point," replied Rev. Powers, with a composure that was not less irritating to the high spirits of Herbert than to

the Methodist minister; "and I shall offer another consideration, that is in no way dependent upon my veracity, by asking you if you believe there are no Christians in other churches than the Methodist; such as, the Presbyterian, the Baptist, etc.?"

"Tho your question is too absurd for notice, I will answer it; most assuredly I do."

"You grant that the creeds of these different churches are different?"

"In some points they differ, certainly," replied the Methodist minister, with an air of scornful condescension.

"You will concede, for example, that one could not at the same time believe the Methodist 'Articles' and the Presbyterian 'Confession', will you not?"

"I will concede that in certain minor doctrines they differ, but they both hold the orthodox faith."

"Are those minor doctrines concerning which you concede you differ essential tests of Christianity?"

"Why, certainly not."

"Then why do you hold them, and thus bar those whom you acknowledge to be Christians from your church?"

Rev. Merlin hesitated, and Rev. Collins asked:

"Do you deny the orthodox faith?"

"I or my church?"

"I mean both."

"Our creed is the Bible."

"You evade my question instead of answering it," replied Rev. Collins, sharply.

"Not intentionally."

"You certainly know what is meant by the orthodox faith?" replied the Presbyterian minister, sarcastically.

"If by orthodox you mean correct or sound in doctrine, I think I have answered your question, Rev. Collins, for there is certainly no creed so orthodox as the Bible. If you use the word in its narrow technical sense; that is, a belief in the doctrine of the 'Trinity', I would say that we do not require a belief in this or any other man-made doctrine as a condition of membership. Our church grants to each of its members the right to read and to interpret the Scriptures for himself, and to make any controverted doctrine a test for membership would be a violation of a fundamental principle."

"I don't understand how you can violate the principle of a thing that has no principle," said Rev. Merlin, sharply.

"I do not understand you, Rev. Merlin. The only interpretation I am able to put upon your

remark would be a reflection upon the Bible, and that I am certain is not your meaning."

"Not to make a belief in the orthodox faith a condition of church membership is to deny it, and to deny the orthodox faith is *heresy*," said Rev. Collins, with an emphatic gesture of the head.

"Allow me to suggest, Rev. Collins, that your first assertion requires demonstration, and that you should attach to your last statement your idea of orthodoxy, for the words, 'orthodoxy' and 'heresy' are absolutely meaningless except in their relation to the ideas of the one using them—they are both terms that smell strongly of the breath of the speaker."

"In your sneering reference to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, Mr. Powers," said Rev. Merlin, "as a 'man-made' doctrine, you only expose your irreverence and ignorance."

"I presume that you do not mean to say that the doctrine as it is written in your creed can be read from the Bible, Rev. Merlin?"

"Why, certainly not; the same words are not found in the Bible, but the same doctrine is unmistakably taught there."

"Words stand for ideas, and it is said no two stand for exactly the same idea; when you change the words, you change the ideas. If the men that wrote those creeds really wanted

to express Bible doctrines, why did they not retain Bible language? Then, too, is not the condemnation against adding to God's *words* as strong as that against teaching false doctrines? Is it not written: 'Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar?' "

"For one, I should like to hear this man talk on this subject, where he could have opportunity to explain these things more fully," said Mr. Hudson, the proprietor of the Sandpre Roller Mills. Mr. Hudson, who was an earnest Christian man and an active church worker, was a warm friend of Mr. Rule's, who invited him to the meeting this evening. He was formerly a member of the Friend's church, more commonly called 'Quakers,' but had never united with any church since moving to Sandpre.

"I should be in favor of that," said Mr. Brown.

"I think we should all enjoy hearing Rev. Powers speak," said Mrs. Rule.

Two or three others express themselves to the same effect.

"I think it a good suggestion," said Mr. Rule, "if Rev. Powers will consent."

"I should be glad of such an opportunity, I am sure," said Rev. Powers.

"What time would suit you, Rev. Powers?"

"Should it be on Sunday? I am preaching every Sunday, but could get a day off if necessary."

"I think Saturday evening would be better than Sunday, as there would be nothing else going on in town then," said Mr. Winnow; and a number of others expressing the same opinion, Saturday evening next following was agreed upon.

"Where shall this address be given?" asked Mr. Rule.

"How about the Presbyterian church?" inquired Mr. Hudson. "That is about the largest and most convenient in town."

Mr. Rule turned toward Rev. Collins.

"Not by my consent," replied the pastor; "the trustees can do as they like."

Mr. Rule turned toward the Methodist pastor.

"Nor the Methodist church, either. It was built for the purpose of denouncing such doctrines and not to promulgate them. And I will say more, that if this young man comes into this community spreading his heresies, I shall use my pulpit to denounce both him and his doctrines."

"In which case, I should be very glad to share your pulpit with you, Rev. Merlin," re-

plied the visiting minister, fixing his eyes steadily upon the Methodist pastor.

"Why not use the Court-house?" askt Herbert.

"Would you object to speaking in the Court-house, Rev. Powers?" askt Mr. Rule.

"Not at all; if my services are of use to you, they are at your disposal."

"We have a good court-room, very commodious; I think the largest assembly room in the town," said Mr. Rule. "Then if that is agreeable," continued Mr. Rule, "we will set the appointment at the Court-house next Saturday evening. We will have some posters printed, and see that notice goes into each of the papers this week."

The assembly broke up. Rev. Merlin and Rev. Collins, who were the last to arrive, were the first to leave. They went out with a determined expression on their faces.

"Herbert," said Mr. Rule, as he handed him his coat and hat, "we shall be glad to entertain Rev. Powers for the night, unless you have made other arrangements."

"Very well," replied Herbert, and turning to Rev. Powers, who was standing at his side, he added, "I am sure you will enjoy your visit with Mr. Rule's family. I will see you in the morning before train time."

"How long will you be in our town, Brother Powers?" askt the Baptist minister.

"I expect to leave on the eight o'clock train in the morning."

"Unless it would inconvenience you," said Mr. Rule, "we should very much like to have you remain at least until the evening train, as we have some business matters we should like to talk over with you."

"O, it will not inconvenience me at all; and I shall be very glad to wait for the evening train, if you wish."

"Then I shall have opportunity of seeing you and having a talk with you tomorrow," said Rev. Bailey, taking his leave.

* * * * *

"Theora," said Herbert, as they walkt homeward, "you did not tell me what was troubling you when I called for you yesterday evening. Aren't you going to tell me?"

"O, it didn't amount to anything," said Theora, carelessly.

"But I know you had been crying, and I think I was in some way connected with it, tho I cannot imagine how."

"Well, it is all right now anyway. I am not crying now, am I?"

"But why not tell me what it was?"

"Because, it doesn't amount to anything now, and it wouldn't do any good to tell you."

They walkt in silence some distance.

"Herbert, are you mad at me because I don't tell you," askt Theora, looking up into his sober face.

"No, I'm not mad; but do you know that will annoy me until I know what it is? I am sure I am keeping no secrets from you, and I do not think you should from me."

"I really had not thought of your caring, Herbert. I'll tell you if you'll promise"—

"O now, just tell it; and we'll attend to the promises after," said Herbert, laughing. "What is it?"

"It really doesn't amount to anything at all, Herbert, and I would much rather not tell it," said Theora, after thinking a moment.

"Tell me, Theora, what it is," said Herbert, looking down into her face earnestly.

"I'll tell you, Herbert," said Theora; "Rev. Merlin told me that it was my duty as a Christian to break my engagement with you. But it doesn't bother me now, for I am sure you have just as good right to your views as he has to his, and Rev. Powers tonight explained away all his talk about orthodoxy and heresy. O Herbert, you don't know how much good that meeting tonight did me."

But Herbert Brown had not heard a word that his companion had uttered after her first sentence. Theora did not see in the moonlight the teeth set, the lips draw tight, the brow contract, the gleam from the eyes; but she did notice his silence, and looking up into his face, she said:

"You don't care now, do you, Herbert?"

"Don't care!" exclaimed Herbert, half reproachfully; "do you suppose I don't care for anything?"

"Why, Herbert," said Theora, laying her other hand upon his arm and looking up half frightened, half pleading, into his face, "you are angry!"

It was the first time she had ever seen that expression on his face, and it half frightened her.

"Did you suppose that such news would make me happy, Theora; that I would enjoy having some one under the pretense of religion trying to alienate the affections of the one I love?"

"But, Herbert, it is all over now. You won't say anything to *him*, will you?"

* * * * *

At eleven o'clock, Herbert Brown was pac-

ing the floor of his room like a caged beast, his face white with rage, his eyes gleaming with fierceness, his firm jaw set with determination, his whole being resenting what he considered an attempted wrong. It was well he had the night to cool his fiery spirits.

CHAPTER XIII.

GLIMPSES.

"The wind bloweth where it listeth."—Jn. 3:8.

At seven o'clock the next morning, Herbert Brown was walking briskly down the street toward Mr. Rule's residence, that he might have a little talk with Rev. Powers before the train arrived. He was not aware of the change in arrangements. Rev. Merlin was just returning from the post office, where he had gone early to mail a letter, written the night before after his return from conference, to his presiding elder. He had gone thus early in order to catch the mail for the early morning train. Herbert recognized the minister when he was nearly a block away. His first thought was to pass him without speaking, and await a more convenient opportunity to talk with him, for Herbert was anxious to have a talk with his visiting friend before train time. But as he approacht his impulse to speak increast.

"Good-morning," said Herbert, as they met, looking the minister straight in the face.

"Good-morning, sir," responded the other in a strong, imperious tone.

"Just a moment, Mr. Merlin," said Herbert, as the minister was passing him, "I should like to speak to you."

"Certainly, certainly," replied the minister, turning with an air of dignified condescension.

"I wish to speak to you regarding your counsel to Miss Winnow concerning myself."

"You will have to be more definite, young man; I do not understand you," replied the minister, coloring slightly, but making an effort to retain his assumed superiority.

"I think you do, but that there may be no misunderstanding—I refer to your advice to Miss Winnow to break her engagement with me, to violate her vows; and I wish to request that in the future you do not meddle with my affairs."

"That will depend somewhat on whether your affairs lie in the path of my official duty. Miss Winnow is a member of my flock, and the advice I gave her was for her spiritual welfare."

"The advice you gave her was a piece of low-down, cowardly, dastardly villainy, prompted by nothing but malice and envy, and able to accomplish nothing except the marring of the happiness of one that is too pure to

need any of your malicious, hypocritical counsel; and I wish to ask you, sir, if I may expect this to be the end of this matter?"

"I shall discharge my duty, without"—

"I have no time to exchange words with you," said Herbert, stepping forward and laying his left hand with a slight grip upon the shoulder of the minister, his face white with anger, his eyes gleaming; "I have asked you whether this shall be the end of your meddling with my affairs, and I want your answer—*yes* or *no*!"

The minister shrunk back, but felt the grip of the strong hand tighten. He remembered the fate of the big saloon-keeper. He saw the fierce, determined look in the face before him. These impressions past through his mind like a flash.

"Yes," he answered quickly, "I do not desire"—

"I don't care what you desire, nor do I have time to hear it, but you will do well to keep your word. That's all!" and Herbert Brown turned scornfully on his heel and walked briskly away, snapping his fingers occasionally as his temper cooled. He found Mr. Rule's family at breakfast.

"Just come out into the dining room, Herbert, and have a seat, where we may talk

while we eat. We are just eating breakfast," said Mr. Rule, after he had taken Herbert's hat and coat. "Rev. Powers has consented to remain with us until the evening train, and so we were in no hurry for breakfast."

"I am certainly glad," said Herbert.

"Won't you sit up and have some cakes with us, Herbert?" asked Mrs. Rule.

"O no, thanks; I just left the breakfast-table to hurry over to have a little talk with Rev. Powers before he left and before time for me to go to the store."

"How did you like the conference last evening, Herbert?" asked Mrs. Rule.

"Well, in a good many respects, I liked it. I think it undoubtedly demonstrated the truth and the correctness of our position."

Just then the kitchen door opened, and Mrs. Young entered, and setting a small pail on the kitchen table she came on into the dining-room.

"Good-morning, good-morning," she said, speaking first to the minister and Herbert, and then to her parents. "I thought I would bring the milk over myself this morning and tell you what I heard. Mrs. Jones was just over for milk, and she says that Rev. Merlin is going to write to his presiding elder to be here

and reply when Rev. Powers speaks, next Saturday evening."

"Haven't they preachers enough here?" asked Mary.

"No, I think they demonstrated that pretty thoroughly last night," said Seth, and all smiled at his ready wit.

"I think it is just a shame," said the impulsive Ruth; "they already have three or four preachers here against us, and why do they want to send for another? I just don't think it is right."

"For my part," said Herbert, "I am very glad they have sent for him. It is an open acknowledgment of their inability to meet the issue themselves. All their preachers and presiding elders and bishops combined cannot make the Bible say what it does not say."

"Well said, Mr. Brown," said the minister, with a look of approval.

"We will just move into the other room," said Mr. Rule, "where it will be more comfortable."

When all were seated, Mr. Rule handed the Bible to the minister, who read a chapter; and all knelt at their chairs, while the minister offered a short, earnest prayer.

"In case there should be truth in the rumor, Rev. Powers," said Mr. Rule, after the devo-

tion had ended, "what course would you think advisable to follow?"

"The course their actions may suggest. We have, I think, nothing to fear. We are in the right, and discussion and publicity are always beneficial to the right."

The conversation was interrupted by a knock at the door, and Rev. Bailey entered.

"I have just received a telephone message," said the Baptist minister, "requesting me to attend a wedding at noon today fifteen miles from here, and so I called early to have a word with Rev. Powers before I went, lest I should not get back in time to talk with him after my return."

"I am very glad you called, Rev. Bailey," said Rev. Powers.

"What I want to talk with you about is your plan for organizing the union church of which we were talking."

"I fear it will not be a union church, Rev. Bailey, from the tone of the other pastors' talk last evening," replied Rev. Powers; "but should such an organization be effected it should offer a reasonable, and I think the only possible, basis for union of all Christians."

"What do you mean by the only possible basis of union?" asked the Baptist minister.

"The Bible as their only creed, with the

right of individual interpretation of the same."

"I fully agree with you in that. What is your plan for effecting such an organization?"

"I see you mistake my visit here, Rev. Bailey. I did not come here to organize a church, or even to suggest a plan for such an organization. I came at the request of Mr. Brown here simply to attend your conference, and to exchange ideas."

"True," said Mr. Rule, "but this is the very business for which I requested you to remain with us today; and it is our pleasure that you give us your plan for effecting such an organization."

"At Golden we met together and organized by adopting articles of association, electing a board of five directors, or trustees, and officers. Then we incorporated and proceeded to build our church."

"What name have you taken?" asked Rev. Bailey.

"Our place of worship is known as 'Bible Chapel', and as individuals we take simply the Bible name Christians."

"How do you receive into the church?"

"We welcome all that come—Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, 'Quakers'—we have members from all these and a few other denominations."

"Do they cause any trouble by contending for their particular doctrines?" asked Mr. Rule.

"We have not had a single instance of such a thing. Not one from the Methodist church has ever so much as mentioned their doctrine of 'Probation', not one from the Presbyterian, their doctrine of 'Election', nor one from the Baptist insisted upon the mode of baptism. But we 'let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind'."

"I like the plan, Rev. Powers, and I believe my little congregation will accept it," said the Baptist minister. "I believe you are in the right, and I sincerely wish the Christian world would accept the plan, and let us have done with this expensive, soul-damning sectarianism."

"I am quite sure that, if you recommend it, your congregation will accept the proposition, Rev. Bailey," replied the visiting minister; "for I find that the element opposed to such a move is not the members, but the ministry."

"I fear there is too much truth in your last statement, Brother Powers. In case the new organization is effected, our house, tho rather small and somewhat old, should become the property of the new organization."

"I should favor building another house," said Mr. Rule; "but the location is undoubted-

ly the best in town, and the old building could be sold to good advantage."

"I guess you will have to excuse me, as I shall be needed at the store," said Herbert, rising. "I shall be pleased to have you call at the store, Rev. Powers, when you and Mr. Rule have completed the plans for the future, and go up and take dinner with me."

"Thank you," replied the minister, and Herbert started toward the door.

"Do you know, Herbert," said Mrs. Rule, "that Bill Miller has been making threats?"

"Threats about what?"

"Why, against you, Herbert."

"O, I guess there isn't much danger. You know it is said, 'A barking dog never bites'."

"And still, Herbert," said Mr. Rule, "it is wise to be on the guard in such a matter. The chief merit of that old saying is its age. Miller is a bad character, and will bear watching."

"O yes, of course," replied Herbert, half carelessly. "I thank you," and he closed the door behind him.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SATURDAY EVENING MEETING.

"Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."—Mat. 16:18.

It was Saturday evening. Rev. Powers had arrived on the six o'clock passenger train, and had spent the hour and a half before going to the Court-house at the home of Mr. Rule. The moon was at its full. It was mid-winter, and the air was still, clear and frosty. The Court-house was well warmed and lighted. The meeting had been well advertised, both thru the papers and by the gossip of the town.

"I expect the presiding elder of the Methodist church will be in your audience this evening," remarkt Mr. Rule, as he and Rev. Powers walkt toward the Court-house.

"What is his name?"

"Dr. Swiggart. Are you acquainted with him?"

"I think not. I do not remember the name."

"I understand he came in on the morning train," added Mr. Rule, as they entered the Court-house.

The large room was well filled. The audience was expectant. The pastors of each of the churches, except the Catholic, were present. Dr. Swiggart and Rev. Merlin were seated about the center of the room.

An opening song was followed by invocation by Rev. Bailey, after which Mr. Rule stepped to the platform and introduced the speaker by saying simply—

“Ladies and Gentlemen, I have the pleasure of introducing Rev. Powers, a minister of the Gospel.”

As the young minister stepped upon the platform, every eye was fixed upon him. There was something in his step, in his movement, and in his face as he turned toward the audience, that commanded respect. He laid his Bible closed upon the desk before him, and without prelude, introduction or explanation, proceeded with his discourse, after quoting a text from Acts 24:14—

“‘I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.’

“No words of the English language have been more extremely misused than have the words ‘*heresy*’ and ‘*orthodoxy*’. Under the ban of the one has been shed the blood of hundreds

of thousands of the purest, best, most righteous and most holy of God's creatures; under the cloak of the other have been hidden hypocrisy, theft, robbery, murder, and every other crime known to the human race. Under the false title of Orthodoxy, Hypocrisy refused fellowship to John Wesley, excommunicated Martin Luther, burned John Huss at the stake, tried, imprisoned, beat and banisht Paul, and crucified the Savior of the world—and all these suffered under the name 'Heretic' at the hands of the so-called 'Orthodox' churches of their day. What is this thing called 'Orthodoxy'? What is the 'Orthodox' faith?" askt the speaker; and raising the Bible in his right hand above his head, he continued: "This is the only *orthodox* creed in the world."

For an hour and a quarter the speaker held the rapt attention of his large audience. His earnestness was eloquence, his logic was convincing, his manner and style were pleasing and attractive. He closed with the following words:

"There is authority in the Bible for but one church, without divisions or branches; and that church should be so named, organized and governed as to furnish a home for all Christians. No church has a Scriptural right to ex-

ist that by its creed excludes a single Christian."

Having ended his discourse, he raised his hand as a gesture to the audience to rise to receive the benediction, when Rev. Merlin sprang to his feet, his hand lifted, exclaiming—

"I'd like to make an announcement before you dismiss."

"Certainly," replied the speaker.

"I will just say," said the Methodist pastor, coming to the front and turning facing the audience and speaking in a loud tone, "that Dr. Swiggart, the presiding elder of this district, will speak in the Methodist church tomorrow at eleven o'clock, at which time some of the assertions of our young brother will be weighed in the Gospel scales, and his little theory exploded. All are invited."

"Be careful you do not use your church scales instead of the Gospel scales," said the young minister, smiling; "and I would suggest that you take care that the explosion does not rack your church."

The audience broke forth in a hearty cheer. As soon as it was ended, Rev. Powers added:

"I have never had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Swiggart, but since my remarks this evening have been found worthy of his attention,

I will just say that if he will divide the time with me, I shall be pleased to remain over the Sabbath and hear him."

There was a short silence, followed by another burst of applause.

"I have no time to divide with young enthusiastic dissenters," replied the presiding elder.

Two or three hisses and a general murmur broke out in the audience. Rev. Powers raised his hand in gesture for attention, and as soon as he secured it, said:

"The audience will please rise," and turning toward the presiding elder, he said, "Will Dr. Swiggart pronounce the benediction?"

The meeting broke up in considerable confusion. Groups here and there were talking, some boisterous and laughing, others earnest. Several came forward to make the acquaintance of the new minister.

"Herbert, when will the new church be organized?" asked Theora, as they walked homeward.

"I do not know. I rather think arrangements will be made to have Rev. Powers hold a revival meeting here before long."

"O, wouldn't that be nice! How I wish he would! I am sure he would succeed. I thought the sermon tonight was one of the best I ever

heard. I think it was so fortunate that you happened to meet him and get acquainted with him."

"Yes, I think so, too. I can see now that we should have had a pretty difficult task without such a leader, and it is going to be no very light one anyway, I predict."

"Herbert, I am so glad this plan has been adopted, and we can have a church where we can both belong and both believe its creed. I don't see why any one should want anything else for their creed than the Bible. But I don't understand why the ministers make such opposition."

"They don't all. Rev. Bailey has fallen in with the move, and thinks his church will come into the new organization."

"I thought he would. Then we shall have a house already."

"Mr. Rule is in favor of selling that house and building another, and I think that will be better, as the Baptist house is old and small; but the lots are an excellent location for the new house."

"O, won't that be fine!" exclaimed Theora. "But what makes the other ministers act as they do?"

"I don't know, but I think it is their salaries as much as anything," answered Herbert, as

they entered the parlor of Theora's home. "Theora, you know we have never decided who should pronounce the ceremony for us. It is only a month now until the day."

"Yes, I was just thinking of that this evening while Rev. Powers was speaking," said Theora, blushing slightly. "I think it would be so nice to have him, Herbert."

"I am glad you think so. Shall I ask him about it tomorrow? I am going home with him tonight to attend his church at Golden tomorrow."

"O, won't that be nice! Yes, Herbert, I should rather have him than any one else. Had you thought how close our lots are to the Baptist church?"

"They are only half a block away. I let the contract for our house today, after the plan we decided upon last week. As I will not get back until Monday morning, I shall probably not see you again for a week, Theora. Good-night," and Herbert stooped to kiss the lips and to look into the face of the one so soon to be his own. But ah! who can read the future?

CHAPTER XV.

BURNING OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

"Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?"—Is. 29:15.

Gong-gong-gong-gong! It was the fire-bell of Sandpre. Herbert Brown sprang from his bed at an hour past midnight, and as he raised the window of his bed-room, he heard a voice shout "Fire! fire!"

"Fire!" shouted Herbert, as loud as he could, and lowering the window hurriedly drest himself. As he rusht into the street, he saw a dense smoke rising from the direction of the Presbyterian church. By this time the street was alive with people, all running in the same direction, shouting "Fire! fire!"—"Where? What is it?"—"The Presbyterian church is burning!" Farther down the street the clang-clang-clang of the fire-wagon was distinctly heard. A fiercely cold wind was blowing almost a gale from the north-west. Just as Herbert turned a corner and came into full view of the church, the whole front burst

into flame. The entrance to the church was at the north-west corner, and the fire had evidently started in the vestibule. Like some ghostly fiend the red demon climbed to the very top of the church-steeple, and there seemed to bid defiance to the helpless throng that had gathered. Flashing, crashing, roaring, the battling flames, borne by the furious gale, leapt across the roof, and soon enveloped the entire building. The little volunteer fire department was absolutely helpless against the fury of the elements. The magnificent Presbyterian church, the newest, the largest and the most modern, was doomed.

Rev. Collins and Rev. Merlin stood near the front of the burning building, talking earnestly, almost animatedly. A number had collected around them.

"How did it start?" asked one, coming up to the group, and addressing the pastor.

"That is as much a mystery to me as to you," replied the minister.

"Where did the fire start?" asked another.

"I first saw the fire from my bed, through the window in the vestibule. After giving the alarm and dressing as fast as possible I ran over to the building. There was then no fire in the main part of the building. I ran back and again gave the alarm over the telephone.

By the time I had returned, the flames were bursting into the assembly room."

"Then it must have been the work of an incendiary," said another.

"Undoubtedly so," replied the minister; "it could not have been other. There has been no fire in the building since last Sunday."

"Some one has lost something," said one of the group, pointing toward a little red object lying near the steps of the burning building, now quite plain in the light of the fire.

The speaker shielded his face with his hands, rushed forward and secured the object. It proved to be a little morocco folder about two by three inches in size. Whether a comb-case, a picture-case, or a pocket-book, the eager crowd was not able to tell. As soon as the finder was at a comfortable distance from the heat of the fire, he raised the little case and fixed his eyes upon it, and as he did so, a strange expression came over his face. He raised his eyes and looked over the crowd, as if seeking some one. He opened the case and looked within, and the mysterious expression of his countenance became only the more puzzling, as he again lifted his eyes and peered into the faces of the crowd. He hesitated. "What is it?"—"Let's see," half a dozen

voices broke the silence at once. He hesitated no longer, but, closing the little case, he claspt it firmly in his hand, and beckoned to Rev. Collins, who stept quickly to his side. They stept a little to one side, and the minister took the case and examined it closely, with much the same expression on his face that the other had shown, and like him cast a searching look over the crowd. He motioned to Rev. Merlin. The two examined the case together, both the outside and the inside, carefully and eagerly. Then the three engaged in low, though animated, conversation, glancing, and occasionally pointing, to the spot where it was pickt up. All turned again and lookt through the expectant, anxious crowd as if seeking some one. There was another husht, but plainly excited, conversation, after which Rev. Collins walkt over to Mr. Robb, the county attorney, who was standing not far away from the little group. He took him by the arm and led him to one side. A few hurried words were exchanged, and they joined the other two. A few more words, and the four walkt away from the wondering crowd to the Presbyterian parsonage.

The crowd gazed in silent amazement at the departing group.

"What was that?" askt some one.

"I think it was a little red book, probably a pocket dictionary," replied another.

"No," said another, "I think it was a morocco comb-case, and I think there was a name printed on the outside in gold letters."

"I believe," said another, "it was a pocket photo-case. I think there was a picture inside that they were looking at."

"Was it the Presbyterian church that was afire?" askt Theora and her mother together, as Mr. Winnow returned to his home at half past two o'clock in the morning.

"Yes."

"Did it burn down?"

"Yes, it burned down."

"How did it catch fire?"

"I don't know."

"Could it have caught from the furnace?"

"O no; some one set it afire. There has been no fire in the furnace since Sunday, and then anyway it started in the vestibule, or at least in the front part of the building."

"Who could have done such a thing as that?" askt Mrs. Winnow.

"That's what a good many would like to know just now, I guess."

"Does any one seem to suspect anybody?" askt Mrs. Winnow.

"I don't know. Something was pickt up near the steps of the building that seemed to furnish some clue. At least the county attorney and Rev. Collins and Rev. Merlin went to the parsonage with it."

"What was it?" askt Theora.

"I don't know. It lookt like a red comb-case, so they said that saw it. I didn't see it."

"Did they know whose it was?" again askt Theora.

"I don't know. At any rate they didn't tell."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ARREST.

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."—
Gal. 6:7.

Breakfast was late at the home of Mr. Brown, Wednesday morning, on account of their having been up during the night. They had just risen from the table when there was a knock at the door. Mrs. Brown opened the door, and found Mr. Tuttle, the sheriff, there.

"Will you come in?" askt Mrs. Brown.

"Thank you," replied the sheriff, entering. "Good-morning, Mr. Brown. Good-morning, Herbert."

"Good-morning," they both responded.

"Herbert," said the sheriff, "I have a warrant here for your arrest."

"For *my* arrest?" said Herbert, starting.

"Yes, sir."

"For what?"

"On the charge of arson," replied the sheriff, handing him a copy of the warrant. "You had better put on your coat; it's pretty cold."

"For burning the church last night?" asked Mr. Brown.

The sheriff nodded in the affirmative.

"What! Herbert? Herbert *couldn't* have done such a thing! Father!" and Mrs. Brown sank into a chair.

Mr. Brown, his face pale almost as death, stepped to the side of his wife. Herbert's hand trembled perceptibly as he handed back the warrant for his arrest. His face was white as he put on his over-coat and hat. He and the sheriff left the house together.

"Jane," called Mr. Brown to the hired girl.

"Yes, sir," responded the young lady, rushing in; and then seeing the white face of Mrs. Brown, she threw up her hands and exclaimed, "Why, Mrs. Brown, what is the matter?"

"Jane, I wish you would step over and ask Mrs. Adams if she will come and stay with Mrs. Brown for awhile."

"Yes," said the girl, excitedly; and, snatching a shawl off the bed, she dashed out of the house, and went as fast as she could run to the home of Mrs. Adams. She did not even stop to knock, but, rushing in, exclaimed, "O Mrs. Adams, do come quick! There's something the matter with Mrs. Brown, and they want you! O hurry!"

"Why, what is the matter?" askt Mrs. Adams, throwing a shawl over her shoulders and quickly wrapping a fascinator round her head.

"O, I don't know," exclaimed the other, sobbing, as she led the way, running. "I think something awful has happened! She lookt so wild out of her eyes! O dear! O dear!"

They were both out of breath when they reacht their destination. While Mrs. Adams feared something serious had happened, yet she did not share the extreme excitement of her companion.

"Here she is," said Jane, bursting into the room, followed closely by Mrs. Adams.

"Thank you, Jane. That's all," said Mr. Brown; and Jane, half frantic with excitement, went into the kitchen.

"I would like for you to stay with Mrs. Brown for awhile, if you will, Mrs. Adams. I shall have to go up town."

"O father, it *can't* be true!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown, looking wildly into the face of her husband, as he started from her.

"This is only an accusation, Mary," said Mr. Brown, turning again to his wife. "Hundreds of innocent persons are accused of crimes they are afterwards proven innocent

of. Now you must not worry. Mrs. Adams will stay with you. I will look after Herbert's interests," and Mr. Brown put on his coat and hat and walked rapidly down the street in the direction taken by his son and the sheriff.

"O Sarah, it can't be true! I know it is false!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown, wringing her hands and turning her head from side to side, for she was too weak to raise it from the back of her chair.

"I do not know what it is, Mrs. Brown," replied her companion, with a sweet tenderness in her eyes and face that no artist could paint, save that master artist, called Sorrow.

"They have accused Herbert of burning the church last night. But I *know* he didn't do it. Herbert *couldn't* have done such a thing!"

"He is only *accused* of doing it, Mrs. Brown. He will have a chance to prove that he didn't do it. I'm sure he didn't, and you shouldn't worry about it, for it will all come right by and by."

"Yes," sighed Mrs. Brown. "Come closer, Sarah, and let me hold your hand."

"Do you feel faint, Mrs. Brown?" asked the frail little woman, as she drew her chair closer to that of her companion, and took the white hand in her own hard, calloused one.

"O no; but I feel so tired and weak," faintly

replied the other, her head falling upon her shoulder and her eyes closing.

"Jane!" called Mrs. Adams, gently.

"Yes," answered Jane, quickly opening the door; and then, seeing her mistress, she stopt, lifted her hands and exclaimed, "O my!"

Mrs. Adams put up her hand quickly in a gesture for silence, and said quietly,—

"Bring a basin of cold water, Jane."

Jane obeyed quickly, and some cold water was sprinkled on the face of the patient, who opened her eyes and raised her head.

"Hadn't you better lie down?" askt Mrs. Adams.

"I expect so, though I feel stronger now."

"Here, Jane," said Mrs. Adams, "you take her other arm, and we'll help her to the bed."

Steadied between the two, Mrs. Brown walkt to the bed and was assisted upon it.

"Shall I put another pillow under your head?" askt Mrs. Adams, as Jane left the room.

"If you please. Sarah, I am so glad you are here. I do not know what I should do without you. O, if I could only *know* that Herbert is innocent I would give everything,—everything,—everything."

.
Herbert Brown had his preliminary hear-

ing before Justice Smith, and was bound over to appear at the February term of the district court. The main evidence offered was the little red case. Herbert's father, Mr. Rule and Mr. Hudson were his bondsmen.

The news of Herbert's arrest had spread like wild-fire. It was the principal, almost only, topic of discussion at the various points of assembly in the town. Almost every imaginable position was taken by different ones. Some profest his innocence, and declared this an effort on the part of his enemies in the churches to ruin his reputation, for his relation to the churches was by this time well known. Others accepted the evidence as conclusive proof of his having committed the offense, but insisted that he was partially justifiable in the face of the provocation. Others admitted his guilt, but were inclined to treat him with charity because of his past almost faultless life and his high family relations. Others yet declared it a most unjustifiable act, and insisted that his high family relations and good name made the crime only the more inexcusable. Those that professt his innocence, and they were decidedly in the minority, attempted by divers methods to explain the matter of the mysterious little red case. Some asserted that it was not his at all,

and that in the trial before the district court he would deny ownership. Others suggested that he might have lost it, and some enemy finding it had used it thus to injure him. And yet others that he might have been early at the fire trying to save the building, and lost it from his pocket. In answer to all these suggestions of his friends, the question was invariably askt why he did not offer such explanation at his preliminary hearing, and thus secure his acquittal at once. To which it was most surely replied that tho he were innocent yet he likely had no rebutting evidence except his own word, and that would not be considered in a preliminary hearing; but that he would undoubtedly be prepared to prove his innocence at the trial.

Tho Herbert continued his work at the store, yet he was very apparently dejected, and bore a careworn expression, which deepened day after day. At home he ate little, and talkt but little. He spent much of his time in silent meditation. He was markedly absent-minded, and it was growing on him,—so much so that his parents feared his mind was being affected. They did not dare mention the matter to him, though his mother would have given all the world, if she could, to know the truth in the matter. And it were better that

she had known; for suspense is more wearing, more trying, more distracting to the human mind, than is truth, however terrible it may be. She spent long hours alone, when Herbert and her husband were at the store, weeping.

The business at the store, too, had perceptibly fallen off. Many of their regular customers, especially members of the churches, had entirely quit them.

The Presbyterian church building was insured for its full value, and arrangements were made at once to rebuild.

Herbert never mentioned the matter to any one, unless it were to his attorney, Mr. Mabry, the oldest lawyer in the town, and their conversation was an entire secret.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE RING.

"But now it has come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou are troubled."—Job 4:5.

"Theora, your father and I think that you should return Herbert's ring."

"Why, mamma?" and Theora lookt up with a startled expression.

"It would not be proper to preserve an engagement under such circumstances. Your father thinks Herbert will be sent to the penitentiary."

"O papa, will he?"

"I am afraid so."

"But if he is innocent, papa, they can't send him to the penitentiary!"

"I'm afriad he's not innocent," replied Mr. Winnow, seriously.

"You don't think he burned the church house, do you?"

"Things point that way; and he has never denied it, so far as I have heard."

"I don't believe he did it. And even if he did, he's better than some in the churches.

They've treated him just as mean as they could."

"But that is no justification for such a crime," said her mother. "We have talkt with Brother Merlin, Theora, and he insists that it is your duty to return the ring. He says your keeping it under such circumstances is causing much gossip to the detriment of the church."

"Mr. Merlin is a brute!" exclaimed Theora, her eyes flashing like balls of fire for an instant, and then hidden by the tears that gusht forth.

"W-h-y, T-h-e-o-r-a!" exclaimed her mother, in utter astonishment.

"Well, mamma, he is doing everything in his power to ruin Herbert, and Herbert has never injured or harmed him in any way. They hate Herbert just because he is honest and true to his convictions. If Herbert had burned all the church houses in town he would yet be a thousand times better and purer and more a Christian than he!"

"Theora, it does not sound well for you to talk that way," said her father, good-naturedly, and in a tone that showed the sympathy he felt for the idol of his heart.

"But, papa, they're all against him. You know he's honest and true. He may have too

much temper, and if he did burn the church house that was the cause of it. But, papa, you said yourself that he violated the law when he struck 'Bill' Miller, and yet that it was the best thing that had ever happened in this town. You know it was his quick temper that made him do that. Mr. Merlin would have stood there and let that big stout man crush the life out of that helpless little woman."

"But what if it were his temper that led him to do it?" asked Mrs. Winnow. "That is no justifiable excuse, Theora. What may such a temper lead to?"

"But why should I return his ring before he is proven guilty?"

"That you may not be dragged down to disgrace with him," replied her mother. "It will not be necessary after he has been sentenced to the penitentiary, as he in all likelihood will be."

"But, mamma, that would be cruel. I don't believe he is guilty, and he has enough to bear already," and Theora's pretty lips and chin quivered, and the eyes again filled with tears.

"You can send a note with it, Theora, explaining why you return the ring. You can say, if you wish, that it is at your parents request."

Theora looked through her tears for a mo-

ment at the band of pure gold encircling her finger.

"Well, there it is," she said, taking the ring from her finger and placing it on the table at arm's length in the direction of her mother. "You can send it to him, if you want to. I can't do it. I love Herbert," and she laid her head on her extended arms and sobbed aloud.

"No, Theora," said her mother, gently, "it is your place to return the ring. I would do it for you if I could."

Theora, rising, took the ring and went into her room, closing the door behind her. She threw herself upon the bed, burying her face in the pillows.

"O Herbert, why did you do it?" she sobbed.

.
As Herbert Brown glanced over the mail he had just taken from their box at the post-office that evening, he recognized a familiar handwriting. He slipped the letter into his pocket, and wondered all the way home what it might contain. He had not seen Theora since the ill-starred event of the burning of the Presbyterian church, and, for that matter, since the Saturday evening before. Nor had he had any word from her. He had often thought of her, and wondered how she regarded the affair, and what effect the news of

his arrest and the suspicion that rested upon him had had on her affections for him. He felt sure the letter in his pocket contained the answer to all this; and though he desired no information more, yet he thought of opening the letter only with a sickening dread. He laid the mail on the table before his father, and, excusing himself, went up to his own room, where he had left the light burning. Sitting down, he took the letter from his pocket and laid it on the table before him. A tender, pathetic feeling showed on his face as he read again the address on the envelope. There was no mistaking the handwriting. As Herbert sat thus fearing, and yet longing, to open the letter, he noticed for the first time a slight rise in the envelope. He placed his finger upon the elevation, and discovered the ring. He grasped the letter in his hand and held it like one gazing at a vision. His face was white as death, his eyes fixed and burning. He sat thus motionless for some time.

"I'll do it," he muttered between his teeth, dropping the letter upon the table and rising. He lifted the lid of his trunk, and took from it a 38-calibre Smith & Wesson revolver. He turned the cylinder to see that it was loaded. He laid it on the table at his side. He gazed at it for a moment as if admiring its beauty.

Then taking a knife from his pocket he opened the letter. He pickt up the solid gold ring and gazed at it for a moment. He read on the inside of it the Latin words he had had engraved there, "*Ama me semper,*" and for an instant a grim smile played on his features. He graspt the pearl handle of the revolver in his other hand. He sat for several minutes as motionless as a statue, the letter in the one hand, the deadly weapon in the other.

"Yes, I'll end it all," he said, laying the letter and the weapon on the table.

He took from the drawer a sheet of paper, and with his pencil wrote a short letter to his mother. He told her the whole truth, tho briefly, in the matter of which he was accused. He included a kind message to Theora, and finisht by stating his terrible decision to end all at once. As he laid the letter down after reading it, he seemed for the first time to realize fully the blow this would be to his few remaining friends, especially his mother; and he hesitated. He said to himself, half audibly,—

"O, that I had *no* friends. O mother, I wish I could spare you this blow."

Again he seemed to hesitate. Then he remembered his conversation with his attorney that afternoon. He remembered his words,—

"Unless something should develop, God only knows what the jury's decision may be."

He glanced again at the ring. Again that same wild determined expression took possession of his face.

"Yes, I'll end it all now," he said, rising.

He laid the letter he had just written carefully on the table where it would be easily seen. He placed Theora's letter and the ring at its side. He grasped again the deadly weapon. His white lips were drawn tight, his teeth set. He stepped quickly before the large mirror in the room. He started at his own white, wild, ghostlike appearance. But it was only for a moment. He raised the fatal weapon to his temple, looking carefully to make sure there should be no mistake. So deeply interested was he in the awful tragedy, in which he was to be the sole actor, that he did not hear the light step on the carpeted stair-way. Rev. Powers had heard of the burning of the church and of Herbert's arrest; and had come on the evening train to see his friend and to learn the truth, and to offer him any assistance in his power. He had stopt to talk a little while with Mr. Rule before coming to Mr. Brown's residence. On enquiring whether Herbert were at home, Mrs. Brown had answered,—

"Yes, he is in his room. I will call him."

"I wish to have a private talk with him," replied the minister, "and if convenient will go to his room."

"Yes," said Mr. Brown, "I guess it will not be necessary for me to go up with you. The door at the head of the stairs opens into his room."

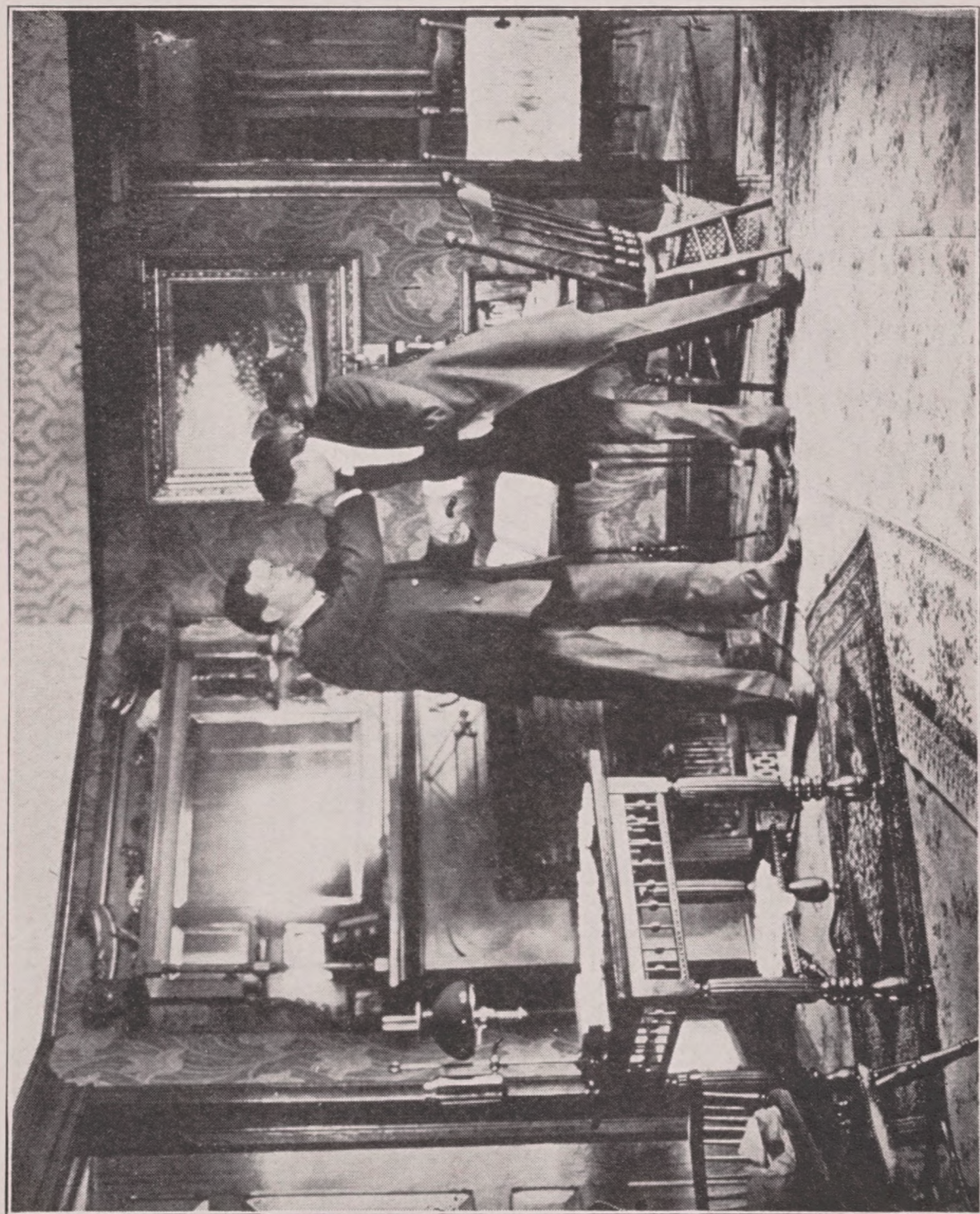
"I am so glad you came, Mr. Powers," said Mrs. Brown. "I am sure your visit will do Herbert good," for well she knew that the affection that has sprung up between them was as strong as the affection between brothers.

The door at the head of the stairs was partly open. As he raised his hand to knock, he unconsciously shifted his position, and he saw through the opening of the door the form of Herbert standing before the mirror, the glistening weapon pointed toward his temple. Herbert's side was obliquely toward him, in such a position that neither could see the reflection of the other in the mirror. The minister stood for an instant,—only an instant,—and yet in that quick instant a multitude of ideas, reflections, impressions, resolutions, flasht through his active mind. He graspt fully the situation. He knew that the last act in that appalling scene awaited but the slight

pressure of a finger. A word might stay it—a word might hasten it. The slightest sound might do the same. There was no time to consider. The next instant might ring with the crack of the revolver. Like a flash the athletic form of the young minister bounded across the room. He had measured the distance and determined his course with admirable precision. He seized the glittering weapon just in front of the raised hammer. Herbert started as one from a night-mare. The minister felt the weapon wrench powerfully in his hand, but it was held in a grip almost as firm and strong as Herbert's. For a moment they stood, each grasping the deadly weapon, staring into each other's face. Each was half frightened at the white face of the other. The minister was more than frightened at the wild, half-demoniacal expression in the eyes and face before him.

"Herbert," said the minister, as soon as he was able to speak, and this was the first time he had ever called Herbert by his given name, "for God's sake give me that weapon."

Herbert loosed his grip on the handle of the revolver, and suffered himself to be led, pale and trembling, to a chair. The minister was trembling hardly less, as he nervously ejected the cartridges from the cylinder of the



"HERBERT, FOR GOD'S SAKE GIVE ME THAT WEAPON."

weapon and dropt them into his coat pocket, and then laid the revolver on the table.

“Herbert,” again spake the minister, “God is the only witness to this besides ourselves, and I pledge you my word and honor that not a breath of it shall ever pass my lips. Now, Herbert, promise me here and now that you will never again contemplate such a thing.”

“You do not understand,” said Herbert, pushing the letter and the ring toward him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

"Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? are not his days also like the days of an hireling?"—Job. 7:1.

"Keep everything as quiet as possible," said the doctor. "Do not wake her to give the medicine, but when she is awake give it regularly according to directions. If there is any change, call me at once. I'll return in two hours."

"What is your opinion of her, Doctor?" asked Mrs. Brown, following the physician to the door.

"Serious. I'm afraid, very serious."

Mrs. Adams lay on her bed, pale, emaciated, exhausted, the eyes but half closed, the balls turned upward, the lips parted, the breath quick, short and rapid.

Two weeks had passed since the events of our last chapter. Mrs. Adams had been taken down with pneumonia soon after she was called to the home of Mr. Brown at the time of Herbert's arrest. In fact, she had at that

time a severe cold, which grew rapidly worse, and finally settling on her lungs, terminated in pneumonia. Mr. Brown had furnished her a physician, and had instructed him to call for consultation any physician he might desire. During the last few days, since Mrs. Adams had been considered dangerously ill, Mrs. Brown, tho still quite delicate, had been at her bedside a part of each day; and Herbert had called regularly to render any assistance he could, and to make sure they were in need of nothing that it was possible to supply.

Jake had been sober since his mother was taken down, and had been very kind and attentive to her, until yesterday, when she was thought to be a little better, and he had gone up town on some errand, and had fallen in with some of his old associates, and had gone with them to the saloon. As is usually the case with one given to constant drinking, when he has not touched it for a few days, Jake could not stop with a drink. He was now staggering drunk at a neighboring house, where every effort was being made to sober him up so that he might be brought to the bedside of his mother.

About an hour before she had roused up and called for him, but had been deceived into believing he was up town and would be there

soon; when the truth was, he had been brought away from the "joint" some two hours before. She had been delirious at intervals during the day, at which times her whole talk and conversation had been to or about Jake,—at times praying for him, at times talking with him and again at other times imagining him converted, and laughing and clapping her hands in joy.

Mrs. Brown was sitting at her bedside watching with tender eyes every movement and every change of feature of the patient. Two or three other neighbor women were present. Herbert had just stepped in so lightly that his mother was not conscious of his presence until he touched her shoulder, and handed her a little package. It was a prescription from the drug-store. Just then the eyes of the patient opened wide, wild and delirious.

"Help! help!" she cried, making an effort to rise to a sitting posture, and moving her hands frantically, as she glared about with that wild, weird, haunting expression so peculiar to delirium. "No! no! you can't have him! You can't have my Jake! He's all I have! Help! help! O Herbert, loose his grip on my shoulder! He's killing me! Where's Herbert?" The women had gathered around her

bed. Mrs. Brown was gently stroking her face and talking to her.

"Speak to her, Herbert," said his mother, turning toward him.

"Here I am, Mrs. Adams," said Herbert, stepping up to the side of the bed.

But the weak form was exhausted, and she sank back upon her pillow. Then, turning her eyes quietly toward Mrs. Brown, she seemed to recognize her.

"O, Mrs. Brown, are you here?"

"Yes, Mrs. Adams; do you feel better?"

"There's nothing ailing *me*, Mrs. Brown. It was 'Bill' Miller trying to take my baby away from me. He wanted to make a drunkard of him. But Herbert saved him, didn't he?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Brown; "now you had better rest awhile."

Again she slept, if such a condition might be termed sleep.

"Herbert," said Mrs. Brown, turning toward him and speaking in a low whisper, "I think you had better run to the house and 'phone for the doctor. I fear she is worse."

Herbert was scarcely gone when Mrs. Adams started up again, clasping her hands, and turning her delirious eyes toward the ceiling, exclaiming,—

"Saved! saved! My boy is saved! Jake is converted! Praise the Lord! O, how happy I am! Jake's a Christian," feebly clapping her hands.

"Poor thing!" whispered one of the women; "she imagines it's the night of Jake's conversion at the meeting."

"O, help! help! I can't get him into the church! They're after him! They're after him! Help me get him into the church! The 'joints' are after him! The devils are after him! 'Bill' Miller is after him! For God's sake, help me save my boy,—my poor boy!" and again she fell back panting upon her pillow.

Mrs. Brown took the thin, wasted hand in hers and gently prest it to her lips. Just then Herbert returned.

"Will he be here?" eagerly asked his mother.

"Yes, he's coming."

"How is Jake, Herbert?" whispered Mrs. Brown.

Herbert shook his head sadly.

Just then the doctor entered. He walked quickly to the bedside, and placed one hand on the forehead and the other on the wrist of the patient. He watched the breathing closely for a moment, and then stepped back and shook his head.

The patient started up again. Lifting her hands and eyes in the attitude of prayer she prayed most earnestly and piteously for half a minute for her boy, and then again became silent.

All faces were turned toward the physician.

"She can't last long," he replied to their inquiring looks.

"It seems too bad for her to have to die without seeing Jake," said Mrs. Brown, weeping. "She begged so hard to see him."

"Yes," said the doctor, "but in his condition it could only have made her worse."

Mrs. Adams opened her eyes, and looked at those around her with a perfectly sane expression. There was no delirium in the look.

"I want to tell you all good-bye," she said. "You have been so good to me and Jake."

She took the hand of each in turn, bidding them good-bye, and asking them to pray for her boy.

"Mrs. Brown," she said, "you have been so good to us. You'll see about my burial, will you?"

"Yes," sobbed Mrs. Brown, "we'll do anything we can, Mrs. Adams. We've not been half so kind to you as you have been to us."

"You'll find a purse in the bottom of my trunk in the bed-room, with twenty dollars in

it. The funeral expenses need not be very much,—just so Jake won't be ashamed; and if there's anything left keep it for him."

"We'll pay all the expenses ourselves, Mrs. Adams. The money shall all be kept for Jake," said Mrs. Brown, brokenly.

"You'll find a black dress in the trunk, too, Mrs. Brown. It is one my husband bought for me just before he was killed. I never felt like I wanted to wear it, and have kept it all these many years to be buried in. I think that is all,—except Jake. I know you'll be good to him. Remember he'll have no mother now. Pray for him, Mrs. Brown. Good-bye."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Brown, holding the thin hand in both of hers.

"Now I want to tell Jake good-bye," said Mrs. Adams.

There was a husht silence, and a startled look on the faces of the little group.

"Yes," said the doctor, stepping closer to the side of the bed; "Jake will be here presently. Now you must rest awhile."

"No, I must see my boy first."

"O yes," replied the doctor, "but you must rest until he comes."

"He'll never come, Doctor. You're trying to deceive me. I can't die until I see my Jake, my poor, poor boy. For God's sake bring him

to me," she exclaimed, wildly. "I know he's drinking, but I *must* see him. He's all I've got in the whole world, and I can't go without seeing him."

"You must get quiet and rest, Mrs. Adams," said the doctor, kindly.

"I can't rest until I've seen my boy. O Mrs. Brown," she said, turning toward her with a pleading look, "do tell them to bring him to me. Think if it were your own boy, and you were dying. Herbert, you brought him to me once. Won't you bring him to me now?"

"Doctor," said Herbert, stepping over close to the side of the physician, and speaking with difficulty, "don't you think it will be better to bring him, even if he is drunk?"

"Probably just as well," replied the doctor.

"Yes, we'll bring him, Mrs. Adams," said Herbert, and he left the room quickly.

"O, I'm so glad," said Mrs. Adams, feebly.

In a few minutes Herbert and another man entered the room supporting Jake between them. Jake was very drunk.

"O, my poor, dear boy!" exclaimed Mrs. Adams, at sight of him. "If I could only have got him into the church!"

"To hell with the church. It ain't no better'n the rest uv us," blurted out Jake, as they led him to the chair by the bedside.

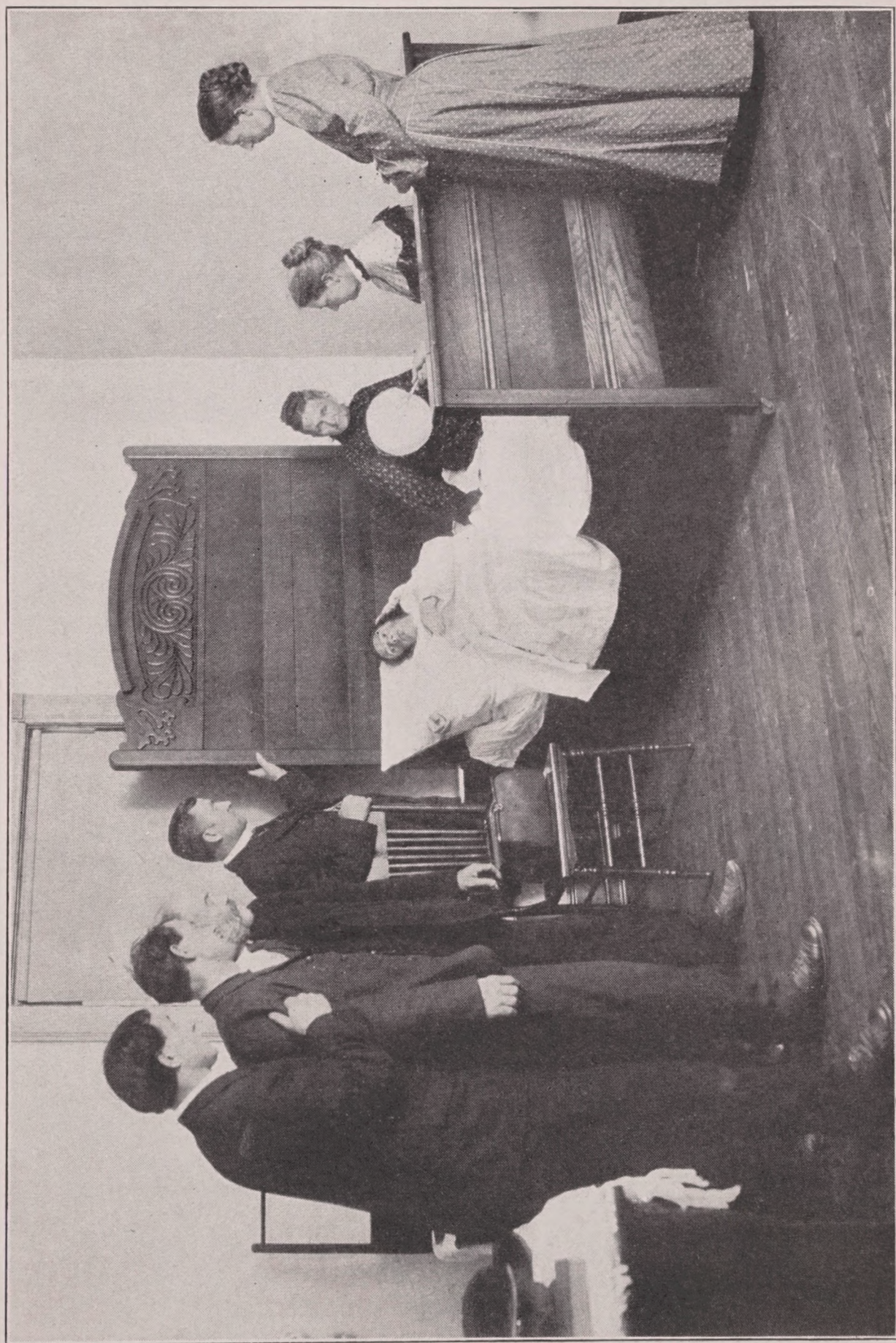
"I'm so glad you've come, Jake. I'm so glad you're here," said his mother, turning upon him a look of almost more than human love. "Let me hold your hand, Jake."

Jake was so thoroughly intoxicated that he did not comprehend the situation; yet he seemed desirous of pleasing his mother, and he made an effort to grasp the thin bony hand next him. Herbert stepped forward and assisted him. No sooner was her hand in Jake's than she made an effort to reach toward him the other, at the same time looking up into his face with a longing, affectionate expression that Herbert immediately interpreted correctly.

"Lean forward, Jake; she wants to put her arm around your neck," said Herbert, pushing Jake into position, and lifting the weak arm and placing it around the neck of her boy.

The faintest smile for an instant played around the thin lips.

"Jake, my boy, who will love you when I am gone! It's so hard to leave you in the cold world alone. Good-bye, Jake, my poor, dear, sweet child. O God, have mercy on my boy! It isn't all his fault. O, save him from a drunkard's grave." The hand dropt from the neck upon the breast. The eyes closed. There was silence for a moment. The lips moved



"I'M SO GLAD YOU'VE COME, JAKE."

again, and she said faintly and falteringly,—
“Church—saloon—Jake.”

Her hand still lay in the hand of Jake, but it had loosed its clasp. The breast ceased to heave. Her face became as calm and peaceful as a sleeping babe's. The doctor bent over her a moment holding her wrist.

“She is gone,” he said.

The stillness of the room was broken by sobs. Mrs. Brown buried her face in the pillow beside the corpse, and sobbed aloud. Herbert, the tears flowing down his cheeks, raised Jake from the chair and led him from the room.

CHAPTER XIX.

ANOTHER SCENE AT MILLER'S JOINT.

"The recompense of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him."—Prov. 12:14.

It had been three weeks since the burial of Mrs. Adams. Jake was sober at the funeral, and his grief was unbounded and truly pathetic, as he bent over the coffin, and lookt for the last time upon the face of his devoted mother. For two or three days after the burial of his mother, Jake refrained from drinking, but during that time he was very gloomy and despondent, and finally he seemed to seek refuge from troubles, and probably remorse,—as those accustomed to strong drink generally do,—by deadening or paralyzing with drink the finer and higher sensibilities.

It was the second Monday in February, and the district court had convened that day, owing to which there were many more people in town than was usual on Monday,—witnesses, jurors and spectators. The feature of the court's docket that was most talkt of; in fact, about the only case talkt of at all, was

Herbert Brown's trial for arson. His trial was set for Wednesday. The town was rife with speculation as to the outcome of it. There had been several animated, almost heated, discussions.

Jake Adams had been working for the last two days, Saturday and Sunday, out on Mr. Winnow's ranch. The heavy snows had covered up the buffalo-grass, and they were compelled to provide sustenance for the thousand or twelve hundred head of cattle on this ranch. This they did by nailing together two two-by-six scantling, about sixteen feet long, in the shape of the letter V, with a brace across the top. Then teams were hitched to them, and they were dragged over the prairies, followed by the hungry cattle.

Jake and two other of Mr. Winnow's cowboys rode into town just after sundown and went to the restaurant for their suppers. The eating house was crowded. After supper some one proposed going to Miller's "joint," which was only three doors away. Half a dozen, including Jake, quit the restaurant for the "joint." They found the place well filled. Tho Jake occasionally frequented this place, yet he and Miller were not on good terms. The day after Miller's fight with Herbert, when Jake had become sober enough to understand what

had transpired, he and Miller had exchanged angry words, and would have come to blows had not others interfered.

When the group entered the saloon, it was apparent that an interesting conversation was going on, in which a few were taking active and rather earnest part, while the others were listening attentively. It required but a moment to discover that Herbert Brown was the subject of discussion, and that "Bill" Miller was the principal spokesman on one side.

"I'll jes' bet any man ten ter one 'at he goes to the 'pen,'" said Miller, with a sweeping gesture of the hand.

"Well, I wouldn't bet on that," said the principal spokesman on the other side, "for the odds seem to be against him, so far's I know."

"Against 'im! Well, I should say!" exclaimed Miller, with a rough, loud laugh. "What better ev'dence 'ud ye want? He wan't in a rod uv whar thet case wus pickt up, after the fire wus discovered. Thar hain't no question as ter its bein' hisn. He hain't never denied it. An' then besides all thet, ever'body knows he'd fell out with all the churches, spec'ly the Presbyterian. They wus agoin' ter turn 'im out uv it. He'd had a fuss with the preacher, an' he'd fell out with the

Meth'dis' preacher too, ez nice a preacher's I ever see, a feller 'at never'd a harmed nuthin', an' he couldn't ef he'd a wanted to."

"O," replied the other, "I expect he burned the house, all right."

"A man 'ud be a d—d fool ter think anythin' else."

"And still it would be a pity to send him to the 'pen'."

"Why?" askt Miller, glaring indignantly at his opponent.

"Because the penitentiary was never built for such as him. He's too good for it."

"Too good fur it!" almost shouted the indignant saloon-keeper. "The devil he is! Herbert Brown's the d—dest, low-down, sneak-in'est, dirtiest pup in this town."

"You're a liar!" came like a flash from another quarter, and every one in the building started. Those sitting sprang to their feet. Every one that knew "Bill" Miller knew there was business at hand, and the others did not have to wait long to learn it. Without a word, Miller leapt over the bar and rusht at his antagonist. Jake well knew, when he spoke, that Miller would resent it, and he was ready to meet him. As they rusht together, Jake struck first, and tho his blow reached its destination, it hardly fazed his powerful assailant.

It was followed at almost the same instant by a crushing blow from his furious adversary, which sent Jake backward over a chair behind him, and he fell heavily on the floor. Animated with rage, he sprang to his feet like a flash, and seizing the chair with both his hands hurled it with all his enraged power straight at the head of his on-rushing enemy. Miller duckt his head, and the chair flew over him and over the bar behind him, and went crashing among the bottles on the shelves. Again Miller rusht upon him, and they exchanged blows, and again Jake received a stunning blow from the heavy hand of the bully which sent him flying backward, and he fell heavily to the floor. Miller rusht upon him with the fury of an enraged tiger. Jake struggled to his feet.

"Stop!" shouted Jake. It was the voice of warning rather than of fear. His enraged foe did not heed it, but came rushing on in his mad fury. Something gleamed for an instant in the dim light of the saloon. There was a quick flash, and the crack of a pistol rang out clear and loud through the room.

"My God!" exclaimed Miller, and he fell forward upon his face at the very feet of Jake, who stood over him, holding in his hand a smoking Colt's revolver.



"MY GOD!" EXCLAIMED MILLER, AS HE FELL FORWARD AT THE VERY FEET OF JAKE.

The crowd in the "joint" rusht forward, and half a dozen lifted Miller from the floor and rusht out of the building, followed by the others. They carried him across the street to the nearest drug-store. He was laid upon the table. The clothes were cut and parted over his chest. Even in that moment of excitement, Jake's practiced hand had missed its aim by only half a hand's breath; for there, only about two inches to the right of the center of the chest, was the gaping, ghastly, bleeding wound where the death-messenger had torn its way. The ball had passed entirely through the body.

"Is he dead?" askt some one.

"No," replied the doctor, busily examining him.

"It is a fatal shot, Doctor?" askt another.

"Don't know," replied the doctor, without looking up; "if it had been an inch to the left it would have killed instantly."

After the wound was drest, Miller was carried to a room in the hotel where he was boarding. His first word on recovering consciousness was an oath, and a threat of revenge against Jake Adams.

"Will he get well?" the doctor was askt, as he came down from Miller's room.

"There's about one chance in ten for him," replied the doctor.

Jake went at once and gave himself up to the authorities. Public sentiment was almost universally in his favor. In fact, the public heaved a breath of relief at the news that Miller was out of the way. The only respect Miller had commanded was through his great physical strength and natural force of character. Jake was acquitted on the grounds of self-defense. His warning word before shooting was clearly heard by all in the saloon, and every witness testified in his favor.

The public was awaiting momentarily the news of the death of "Bill" Miller.

CHAPTER XX.

HERBERT BROWN'S TRIAL.

"For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways."—Job 34:11.

It was eleven o'clock Thursday morning. After almost a day and a half of constant effort, a jury had at last been impaneled. So generally had the matter of Herbert's arrest been discussed that it was very difficult to find twelve men, otherwise qualified, that had not formed an opinion as to his guilt or innocence. All the day before and up to the present time that day the court-room had been filled with spectators, eager to hear the trial. Never before in the history of the county had any trial awakened so much interest.

As the judge announced the impanelment of the jury completed, and that the court was ready to proceed with the trial, a wave of excitement past over the audience. People all over the large room straightened up and craned their necks to catch the first move in the important trial. On one side of the attorneys' table sat Mr. Robb, the county attor-

ney, with Rev. Collins and Rev. Merlin at his back. On the other side sat Mr. Mabry, Herbert's attorney. Herbert sat at the side and a little back of his attorney, and his parents, to the left and a little behind him. Mrs. Brown was leaning on her husband's shoulder for support. She was pale and worn, and wore an anxious expression. Herbert, though he sat erect and looked with a steady eye into the faces of the jurors, yet presented the appearance of one just risen from the sick-bed. His face was thin and white, his eyes tired, though anxious and troubled.

"The state will call its first witness," said the judge.

"Joseph Cage," responded Mr. Robb, and the witness entered by a side door and took his seat in the witness chair.

"Have you been sworn?" asked Mr. Robb.

"Yes, sir."

"Give your name to the jury."

"Joseph Cage."

"Mr. Cage, what is your place of residence?"

"Sandpre."

"What is your occupation?"

"I'm a harness maker."

"Is your place of business in this town?"

"Yes, sir."

"Mr. Cage, I will ask you if you are acquainted with the defendant in this case, Herbert Brown?"

"I am."

"How long have you known him?"

"For the last seven years,—ever since I have been here."

"I will ask you, Mr. Cage, where you were on the night of January fourteenth last?"

"I was at my home until about one o'clock in the morning."

"Where were you after one o'clock of that morning?"

"I was at or near the Presbyterian church."

"What was the occasion or cause of your being at or near the Presbyterian church at that time?"

"It was burning. I was awakened by the fire alarm at about one o'clock and ran to the church."

"Was any one else there when you arrived?"

"Yes, sir; a few."

"About how many?"

"Well, I do not know; probably a dozen or fifteen."

"Was the defendant, Herbert Brown, there?"

"I do not think so."

"Are you reasonably certain he was not there?"

"I do not think he was."

"You say you know him well?"

"Yes, sir."

"You would have recognized him if he had been there, would you not?"

"We object!" shouted Mr. Mabry, almost before the prosecuting attorney had finished his question. "That's a leading question."

"The objection is sustained," said the judge.

"Did you see the defendant at or near the Presbyterian church when you first arrived there?" asked Mr. Robb.

"No, sir."

"Did you find or pick up anything at or near the building while it was burning?"

"I did."

"What was it?"

"It was a little red morocco photograph case."

"Do you have it yet?"

"No, sir."

"Would you recognize it should you see it now?"

"Yes, sir."

"If the court please," said Mr. Robb, rising and addressing the judge, at the same time taking from his pocket a little red case, "I

wish to introduce this as evidence," and he stepped over and handed the case to the judge, who examined it closely and returned it to the attorney with approval.

"Examine this," said the prosecuting attorney, handing it to the witness. "Is that the case you pickt up on the night of the fourteenth of January at or near the Presbyterian church while it was burning?"

"It is."

"How do you know it?"

"I know it by the name on it, and also by the picture in it."

"I desire the jury to examine this carefully," said the prosecuting attorney, taking it from the hand of the witness and handing it to the foreman of the jury.

"What did you do with that case, Mr. Cage, when you found it on that night?"

"I showed it first to Rev. Collins, the pastor of the Presbyterian church, and afterward to Rev. Merlin, and then we turned it over to the county attorney."

"Where did you pick it up?"

"Just in front of the steps of the church."

"About how far from the steps?"

"Not more than two feet."

"I believe that is all," said the prosecuting attorney.

"You say you have been acquainted with the defendant, Herbert Brown, about seven years?" askt Mr. Mabry, on cross examination.

"Yes, sir."

"Have you known him well and seen him frequently during that time?"

"I have."

"Have you ever known the defendant to be guilty of any crime, offense or wrong?"

"No, sir."

"Did you at any time see the defendant on the grounds while the church was burning?"

"I did."

"When?"

"After I had pickt up the case and had showed it to Rev. Collins and Rev. Merlin."

"As a matter of fact, you were looking for him at that time, were you not?"

"Yes, sir."

"That is all."

"Call your next witness," said the judge.

"Rev. Merlin," said the county attorney.

The usual questions pertaining to residence, occupation and acquaintance with the prisoner were askt and answered. Then the prosecuting attorney continued,—

"Have you ever heard the defendant at any time express a dislike for the churches?"

"We object," shouted Mr. Mabry.

"You will state your objection," said the judge.

"The testimony is irrelevant. The only church concerned in this case is the Presbyterian, and the defendant's likes or dislikes for any others is irrelevant testimony."

"The objection is sustained," said the judge.

"I will ask you then if you have ever heard the defendant express a dislike for the Presbyterian church."

"I have."

"Just state to the jury on what occasion, Rev. Merlin."

"At one time," said the minister, turning toward the jury, "at the residence of Mr. Winnow, of this city, this young man askt me some questions regarding a certain doctrine,"—

"We object," again shouted Mr. Mabry.

"State your objection," said the judge.

"A like or dislike for any particular church creed or doctrine is irrelevant and immaterial."

"If the court please," said Mr. Robb, rising, "we propose by this evidence to show the motive that prompted the defendant in burning the Presbyterian church; and certainly such testimony is competent."

"The objection is overruled."

"Go on," said the county attorney, addressing the witness.

"As I was just saying, the defendant asked me a number of questions regarding certain doctrines held by the orthodox churches,"—

"We object," again shouted Mr. Mabry.

"The objection is sustained," said the judge; "the witness must confine himself to questions and discussions pertaining to the Presbyterian church."

"Just give the part of the conversation relating to the Presbyterian church, Rev. Merlin," said the county attorney.

"Well, he denounced the doctrine of that church, and declared that no church holding such doctrine had a right to exist."

"Did he exhibit any feeling or temper during the conversation?"

"Yes, sir; he became quite angry."

"Did you on any other occasion hear him make any threatening statements regarding the Presbyterian church?"

"Yes, sir; at several different times."

"What was another occasion on which you heard the defendant make such statements?"

"On two different occasions at the residence of Mr. Rule, of this city, where several had met together to consider organizing another church."

"What did he say?"

"He repeated the same or similar statements."

"Have you at other times or on other occasions heard him make any threatening remarks regarding this church?"

"I do not remember any other."

"That's all."

Herbert leaned forward and whispered in the ear of his attorney.

"You say the defendant showed anger or temper in his conversation with you regarding the Presbyterian church?" askt Mr. Mabry, on cross-examination.

"Yes, sir."

"Mr. Merlin, did you and the defendant ever, at any time, at any place, on any occasion, have a conversation regarding the Presbyterian church?" askt Mr. Mabry, looking sharply at the witness.

"Well, no; not regarding that particular denomination," replied the witness, uneasily.

"Have you not just testified before this jury, Mr. Merlin, that in conversation with this defendant regarding the Presbyterian church he showed temper and anger?" askt the attorney, leaning forward and fairly looking through the witness.

"Well," replied the witness, faltering and confused before the pointed question and the

piercing look of the attorney, "it was regarding a doctrine that was held by that church."

"A doctrine that was held by that church," repeated the lawyer, with all the scorn and sarcasm of his nature. "Then it was no more regarding that church than any other, was it?"

"I do not know that it was."

"As a matter of fact, it was simply some doctrine held by different churches that you heard the defendant object to, was it not?"

"Yes, sir," replied the witness, falteringly.

"Then as a matter of fact, you never heard him denounce the Presbyterian church at all?"

"Well, not—that is, not directly."

Mr. Mabry eyed the witness for a moment with a look of scorn, then proceeded.

"You testified that the defendant showed temper, and was angry, in his conversation with you, did you not?"

"Yes, sir," replied the minister, restlessly.

"How did he do it?"

"Well, in several ways."

"Did he speak in a loud voice?"

"N-no."

"Did he rise up, or strike at you, or make any attempt against your person?"

"O, no."

"Did he use oaths, or imprecations, or other improper language?"

"No, sir."

"Did he make any gestures with his hands while he was talking?"

"I do not remember that he did."

"What did he do then,—make faces at you?" exclaimed the lawyer, in sarcastic ridicule.

"No, sir," replied the witness, covered with confusion, as the judge rapt for order.

"Mr. Merlin, I want you to explain to this jury how the defendant showed the anger and temper of which you have testified."

"We object," said the county attorney, more to protect his witness than through any belief that there was ground for objection. "The witness has already testified that the defendant showed temper. It is not presumed that one can always explain just in what way one shows temper or anger, though it may be very apparent."

"This is cross-examination," replied Mr. Mabry, "and we have a right to investigate such testimony as this."

"The objection is overruled," said the judge. "The witness will answer the question."

"What is the question?" asked Rev. Merlin.

"The stenographer will read the last question," said the judge.

The stenographer read the question.

"I can hardly tell you just how he showed anger," said the witness, evidently catching the idea from the county attorney, "but he very clearly did it."

"That's all," said Mr. Mabry, with a sneer.

Rev. Collins was the next witness, and corroborated the testimony of the other two witnesses. He testified positively that at no time after he discovered the fire was Herbert Brown in a position to have dropt the case where it was found.

"Call the next witness," said the judge, as Rev. Collins left the stand.

"Theora Winnow," said the county attorney.

As Theora entered the room, there was a stir over the entire audience. Her face was whiter and thinner than usual. Her eyes were sad and troubled. But for all that, she seemed even more beautiful than usual as she followed the constable into the room. As she took her seat in the witness chair, she glanced about her with a half frightened expression. Herbert sat with that same unchangeable expression upon his face. For the first time since that Saturday night when they parted after

the meeting in that very room their eyes met. Ah! How little did they dream on that evening that their next meeting should be in the same room and under such changed conditions and circumstances. Alas! What changes had been wrought! Their plans for the future all thwarted, their engagement broken, their high ambitions crushed! Each at once noticed the change that had taken place in the other's face. Theora's eyes filled with tears, and she turned quickly away to hide them.

"Will you give your name to the jury?" asked the county attorney.

"Theora Winnow."

"Where do you live, Miss Winnow?"

"Here,—in this town," replied Theora, hesitating; for this was not only the first time she had ever been a witness, but the first time she had ever attended a trial.

"Are you acquainted with the defendant in this case, Herbert Brown?"

"Yes, sir," replied Theora, with a sad, sweet softness in her charming voice that seemed to touch and cause to vibrate a chord of sympathy in every heart in that large audience.

"How long have you known him?"

"About five years," replied the witness, after thinking a moment.

"Are you well acquainted with the defendant?"

"Yes, sir."

"I will ask you, Miss Winnow, what relation, if any, existed between you and the defendant?"

Theora hesitated, lookt puzzled and colored slightly, as she replied,—

"We were friends."

"Did any stronger relation than that of mere friendship exist between you?"

"Yes, sir," replied Theora, her eyes filling with tears.

"What was that relation?"

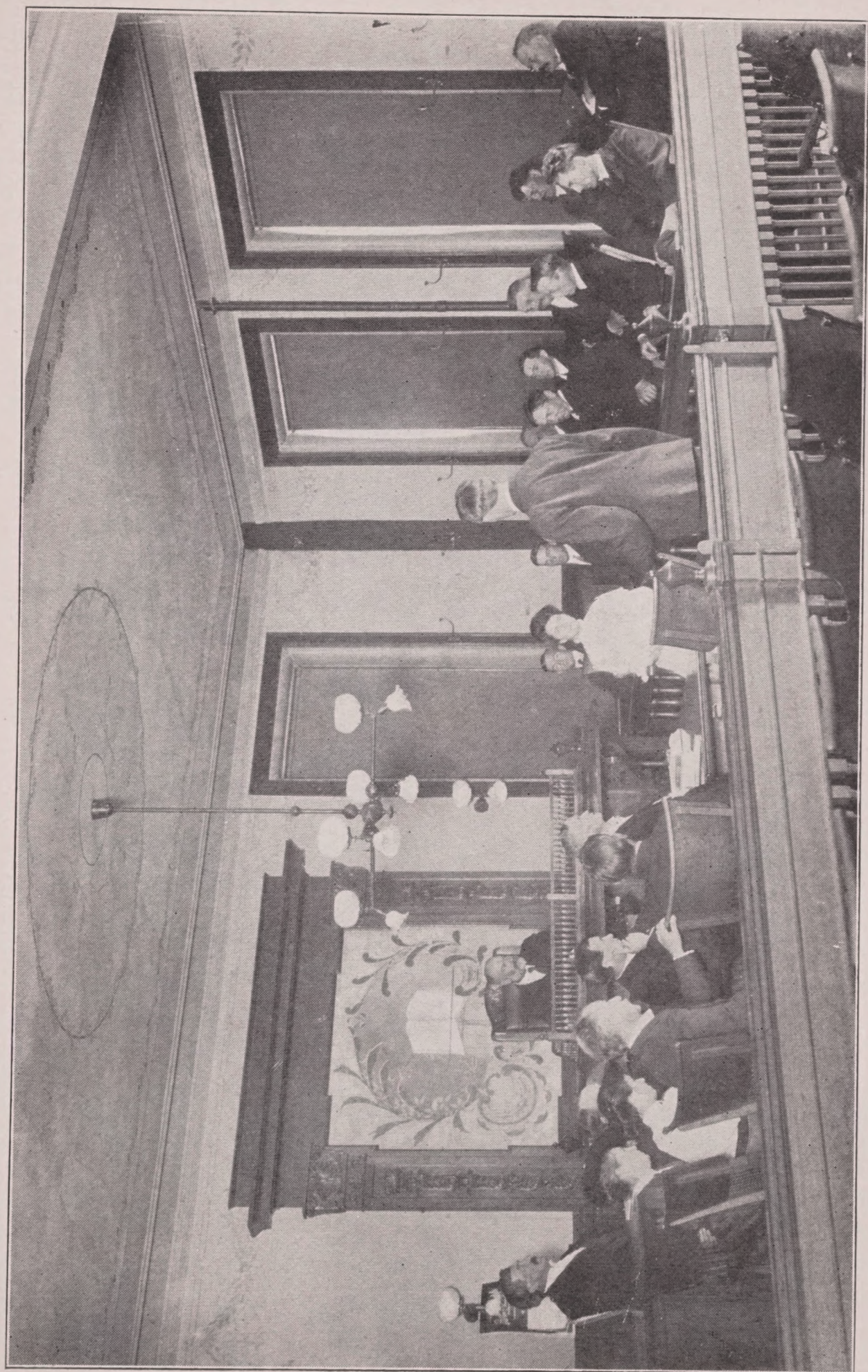
Theora again hesitated, and glanced helplessly toward the judge.

"Just state to the jury, Miss Winnow, what relation existed between you and the defendant, Herbert Brown."

"I don't know what you mean."

"I will just ask you, Miss Winnow, whether you and the defendant, Herbert Brown, were engaged?"

The prosecuting attorney fully expected objection to be made on the grounds that he was asking a leading question, but he askt it, thinking it the best and quickest way to suggest to the witness the information wanted. But Mr. Mabry made no objection.



"WE WERE FRIENDS."

"Yes, sir," replied Theora.

"Does that relation still exist?"

Theora hesitated again. She inadvertently glanced toward Herbert. His eyes, with a sad, yet determined, tho at the same time tender, expression, were fixed upon her. It was only a glance, and she as quickly turned away, her face coloring deeply at the consciousness of her indecorum.

"I do not know," she said at last, and with her answer came the vision of the letter, the ring, and her conversation with her parents; and in spite of her effort to prevent it, the tears filled her eyes, and she was forced to raise her handkerchief to her face. Mrs. Brown, too, had put her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Why do you not know?" asked the lawyer.

"We object to the question as incompetent, irrelevant and immaterial," said Mr. Mabry, though he knew there was little ground for objection; but he did it out of respect to the feelings of the witness.

"If your honor please," said Mr. Robb, addressing the judge, "the relation of this witness to the defendant is a very important matter in this case, and we certainly have a right to place it before the jury."

"The objection is overruled," said the judge;

"but I would suggest, Mr. Robb, that the examination of the witness be as brief and with as much regard for the feelings of the witness as possible."

"I am sure, your honor, I have no desire to distress the witness, but simply to bring the facts as they exist before the jury."

"You will proceed," said the judge.

"I will ask you to examine this," said the attorney, rising and handing her the little case.

Theora took it, and lookt with a fixed, steadfast gaze at the name on the outside.

"Please open it, and look at the inside of it, Miss Winnow."

She opened it and lookt inside, and closed it again, with an expression of almost hatred on her face.

"I will ask you, Miss Winnow, if you have ever seen that case before?"

"Yes, sir."

"I will ask you whether you know whose it is?"

"I think I do."

"Whose is it?"

"It used to be Herbert Brown's."

"Do you recognize the picture on the inside?"

"Yes, sir."

"Whose is that?"

"It is mine."

"I will ask you whether you know how the defendant came into possession of it?"

"Yes, sir; I gave it to him," she replied, struggling to keep back the tears.

"When did you first see that case, Miss Winnow?"

"About two years ago," she replied thoughtfully.

"Did it at that time belong to the defendant, Herbert Brown?"

"Yes, sir."

"When did you last see it before today?"

"I do not remember."

"Well, about when?—a week, or a month, or six months ago?"

"Probably two months ago; but I do not remember."

"Did it then belong to the defendant?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you ever know any one else to own or possess it?"

"No, sir."

"That's all," said the prosecuting attorney.

Mr. Mabry turned and whispered to Herbert, and Herbert shook his head.

"That's all," said Mr. Mabry.

"Just one more question," said the county

attorney. "When last were you in the company of the defendant?"

"I do not remember."

"Well, about when? Can you not remember the occasion, or some event by which you can fix the time?"

"It was at the time of the meeting here, when Rev. Powers spoke in this room," replied Theora, biting her lip to control her feelings.

"That was last month?"

"I think so."

"That is all."

Mr. Mabry bowed, and Theora left the witness stand.

"It is now five minutes after twelve o'clock," said the judge, "and the court will adjourn until half past one o'clock," and giving instructions to the jury, he turned to the constable, saying, "You may adjourn court."

CHAPTER XXI.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

"Ye shall not respect persons in judgment."—Deut. 1:17.

Some did not leave their seats in the courtroom at all, lest they should be unable to get seats for the afternoon session. Others went to the restaurants or bakeries and bought lunches and returned to the court-house to eat them. Fully fifteen minutes before time for the afternoon session every foot, even of standing-room, was taken, and others were trying to gain entrance. Promptly at half past one o'clock the clerk of the court called the roll of jurors, and reported all present.

"The state will call its next witness," said the judge.

"Mrs. Brown will take the stand," responded the county attorney.

Mrs. Brown, assisted by her husband, took the chair.

"Your name?" asked the attorney.

"Mrs. Mary Brown."

"Where do you live, Mrs. Brown?"

"Here at Sandpre."

"What relation, if any, do you bear to the defendant in this case?"

"I'm his mother," replied the witness, her voice trembling slightly.

"I will ask you, Mrs. Brown, where you were on the night of January fourteenth last?"

"I was at home."

"Do you remember any event of unusual occurrence on that night?"

"It was the night the Presbyterian church was burned."

"When did you first learn of the burning of the Presbyterian church?"

"We were all awakened by the ringing of the fire bell at about one o'clock that night."

"You say all. Whom do you include in that?"

"My family."

"Will you just name them?"

"My husband, Herbert and myself."

"By Herbert you mean your son, the defendant in this case?"

"Yes, sir."

"You say you were all awakened by the fire bell. How do you know that, Mrs. Brown?"

"O, I do not know it. I just supposed it. We all got up then."

"Did the defendant sleep in a different room from you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Was it on the same floor?"

"No, sir; it was up stairs."

"And you slept down stairs?"

"Yes, sir."

"Would the defendant have had to pass through your room in entering or leaving the house?"

"No, sir."

"In case he had left his room and gone out of doors, would it have been possible for him to have walkt on carpeted floors and carpeted steps all the way out of the house, Mrs. Brown?"

"Yes, sir," replied the witness, after a moment's thought.

"I will ask you, Mrs. Brown, which left the house that night after the ringing of the fire alarm first, your son or your husband?"

"Herbert left first."

"How long before your husband did he leave?"

"I do not remember. Probably two or three minutes."

"Did not your husband dress as fast as he could?"

"I think so."

"I will ask you, Mrs. Brown, whether there was any other noise or disturbance in or around your house on that night previous to the alarm?"

Mrs. Brown started perceptibly at the question.

"Yes," she replied fearfully.

"What was that disturbance?"

"It sounded like some one on the walk."

"Did you hear the gate shut, or the latch click?"

"I think I did."

"Which did you hear first, the walking or the gate?"

"I heard the walking first."

"Then, I will ask you, in your opinion, was the one you heard walking going from or coming to the house?"

"Must have been going from the house," replied the witness, thoughtfully.

"At about what time did you hear that, Mrs. Brown?"

"I do not know, but it was probably about midnight."

"Did you mention this matter to any one?"

"Yes, sir."

"To whom did you first mention it?"

"I waked my husband up and told him."

"What did he do, or say, if anything?"

"He got up and went to the window and looked out, but said he did not see anyone."

"Did you call your son, the defendant?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know whether he was in his room at this time?"

"No, sir."

"Did you hear any other sound or noise after that, and before the fire alarm?"

"No, sir."

"I believe that is all."

"Mrs. Brown," said the attorney for the defense, on cross-examination, "I will just ask you whether you ever knew your son, the defendant in this case, to be guilty of any crime or offense?"

"No, sir. Few mothers have had better reason, I think, to be proud of their boys than I," and she raised her handkerchief to her eyes, resting her elbow on the arm of the chair.

"That's all," said Mr. Mabry.

Mr. Brown was the next witness, and he corroborated the testimony of his wife. He was followed by Mr. Rule, who was questioned by the prosecuting attorney regarding statements he had heard the defendant make concerning his dislike for the Presbyterian

church, and by Mr. Mabry as to Herbert's reputation.

"Call your next witness," said the judge, as Mr. Rule left the stand.

"James Nutt," said the prosecuting attorney.

There was another stir and murmur in the audience. This was a surprise. Nutt was one of those shiftless, drinking, worthless, unprincipled characters that make up an element in the inhabitancy of every town and city. No one among the spectators had any knowledge as to what his testimony was to be, unless it might be to testify to seeing the defendant at the fire, and they could not imagine why he should be called for that, when so many respectable witnesses could testify to that.

"What is your name?" began the county attorney.

"James Nutt."

"Where do you live?"

"In this town."

"How long have you lived here, Mr. Nutt?"

"Nigh onto about ten years."

"What is your business?" and a smile broke out on the faces of a number in the audience.

"A laborer," and the smile changed into a giggle, and the judge rapt on his desk.

"I will ask you, Mr. Nutt, if you are acquainted with the defendant over there, Herbert Brown?"

"Yes, sir; I know him as well's I know my own father."

"How long have you known him?"

"Ever since I've been here."

"Where were you on the night of January fourteenth last?"

"Well, I was several places. I came home from town about eleven o'clock, and found my old sow had broken out of her pen, and so I struck out to look for her, and didn't get back until a little after midnight, and I had just got into bed when the fire alarm sounded, and then I got up and ran over there."

"I will ask you, Mr. Nutt, whether you met or saw anyone while you were out looking for your hog?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who was it?"

"Herbert Brown."

"At about what time did you meet him?"

"It must 'a' been about twelve o'clock or a little after."

"Where did you meet him?"

"I didn't meet him, but I saw him."

"Where did you see him?"

"Right in front of Ben True's barn."

"I will ask you, Where is that with reference to the Presbyterian church?"

"It's jest south of the Presbyterian church about half a block."

"Just tell the jury the circumstances and what took place there, Mr. Nutt."

"Well," said the witness, straightening up and turning toward the jury, "I was looking for my sow around Ben True's barn, when I heard some one comin', and so I just stood still where I was, kinder in the shade of the barn, until they passed, and I saw that it was Herbert Brown. And after he had gone on by, I went on."

"What direction was he going?"

"He was going north toward the church."

"The Presbyterian church?"

"Yes, sir; the Presbyterian church."

"Did you watch to see where he went?"

"No; as soon as he had past I went on home."

"Are you sure it was Herbert Brown?"

"Yes, sir."

"How close were you to him?"

"Not mor'n ten feet."

"That's all."

Mr. Mabry followed with about five minutes of rapid sharp cross-examination, in which the witness' character and irresponsi-

bility were pretty clearly brought out. At times the witness was more or less confused, but he stuck to his statement.

"That's all," said Mr. Mabry, with a look of disgust.

"Call your next witness" said the judge.

"The state rests," said the prosecuting attorney.

"We should like a few minutes' recess," said Mr. Mabry.

"The court will take five minutes' recess," said the judge.

Very few left the room during recess. The chief topic of discussion was the evidence of the last witness. The general opinion was that he had been bribed; in fact, Nutt had often been suspected of perjury, tho he had never been indicted. But the puzzling question was, Who could have bribed him? Surely the county attorney could not have done such a thing, and he and the two ministers were apparently the only ones taking an active part in the prosecution. While it was the universal opinion, or nearly so, that Herbert was guilty, yet it was about as universally believed that Nutt's testimony was false.

During the recess Herbert and his attorney did not leave the court room, but conversed where they were sitting.

Court was again called to order, followed by the roll-call of the jury, and the judge announced ready for business.

Mr. Hudson was the first witness put on the stand by the defense to testify to the good reputation and conduct of the defendant. There was no cross-questioning.

"Call your next witness," said the judge.

"Timothy Griggs," said Mr. Mabry, and again there was a little stir in the audience.

Presently the tap, tap, of Uncle Tim's cane was heard, and the old man entered the room. He was clad in a plain, rather worn, suit of gray. He wore on his head a cap equally worn, and a large red handkerchief tied round his neck. His long gray hair hung down upon his shoulders. He took his seat in the witness chair, and turned toward the lawyers and the audience with an expression that seemed to say:

"I am here."

"Will the witness please remove his cap?" asked Mr. Robb, respectfully, before the attorney for the defense had begun questioning him.

"No, sir," replied Uncle Tim, with a decisiveness that was conclusive. "When the snow's on the groun' like today, I kain't see

good in the house without my cap ter shade my eyes, an' I'll jes' keep it on."

There was a ripple of laughter over the audience, and a hint at a cheer. The judge rapt on his desk for order, tho a smile broke for a moment over his own sober countenance. Mr. Robb frankly acknowledged his defeat by a smile that took possession of his whole countenance, as he said:

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Griggs; I didn't know."

"The bes' way fur a feller't don' know's ter keep still," said Uncle Tim, and the lawyer followed his advice, at least for the present. But the audience did not, for there was a loud burst of applause.

The judge rapt loudly on his desk, and lookt as angry as it was possible for him to do.

"Will you state your name to the jury?" askt Mr. Mabry.

"Timothy Griggs, though they gin'rally call me Uncle Tim."

"Where is your home, Mr. Griggs?"

"Right here at Sandpre's whar I stay."

"How long have you lived at Sandpre?"

"Longer'n the town has, sir. I lived in this neighborhood 'fore tha's any town in forty miles o' here. I helped drive the stakes when this town wus laid out."

"Are you acquainted, Mr. Griggs, with the defendant in this case, Herbert Brown?"

"Yes, sir."

"How long have you known him?"

"I've knowed 'im all his life, an' his daddy before 'im since 'e wus a chil', an' I rode these plains in the sixties with 'is gran' daddy, one o' the braves' an' bes' men on the frontier. He wus more like Herbert'n his own daddy is. He never saw the man 'at he wus afeard on."

Of course the audience was smiling and enjoying Uncle Tim's testimony, but for all that, the old frontiersman had a reputation for straightforward veracity, as well as sound, shrewd judgment, that carried a weight with it; and Mr. Mabry had done well to select him as one witness by whose testimony he would prove his client's good character.

"You have seen the defendant frequently and are well acquainted with his life?"

"I reckon I've seed him on the av'rage two er three times a day since he wus born."

"From your knowledge of him, Mr. Griggs, what can you say of his reputation, as to whether it is good or bad?"

"Herbert Brown's reputation! Tha hain't a young man in this county 'at's got a better one. An' tha kain't no man hones'ly say a

word agin' 'im, nor again' 'is father nor 'is gran' father. An' tha ain't no boy got a better mother. An' I knowed her fam'ly, too, an' tha ain't no better people'n they wus. The feller 'at tries ter attack Herbert Brown's character's in mighty d—n pore bis'ness, an' the only ones I know uv doin' it's Bill Miller and some uv the preachers."

"That is all," said Mr. Mabry. "We rest our case."

It was a little after four o'clock, and court adjourned until seven.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE CASE GOES TO THE JURY.

"Yet ye say, the way of the Lord is not equal."—Ezek. 18:25.

Long before seven o'clock Thursday evening the court-room was packed by those eager to witness the end of the trial and to hear the pleading of the attorneys. As the judge read his instructions to the jury, the audience listened with close attention to every word.

Herbert's expression was unchanged, except that his face was probably whiter than usual.

Mrs. Brown rested her head against her husband's shoulder. Her face was very white, and she looked tired and weary, though anxious.

Both attorneys bore the appearance of men under high mental pressure.

As the county attorney rose to make the opening argument, every eye was fixed upon him, and a perfect silence prevailed throughout the room. His argument was logical and convincing, and at times eloquent. He reviewed the evidence, dwelling upon the fact that it was upon the testimony of the prisoner's most intimate friends that the state re-

lied for conviction. He anticipated his opponent's plea for mercy on the grounds of the prisoner's reputation and family relations, and replied that if mercy should be shown any one it ought to be to him that had been deprived of pure social advantages and relations, and not to him that had had the advantage of the very best.

Mr. Mabry followed with a most eloquent plea for his client. He denounced the testimony of Nutt as false, and said:

"The only question in my mind regarding his testimony is whether some one as vile as he has bribed him, or whether he has perjured himself simply for the fees as a witness."

As he dwelt upon Herbert's reputation, and his high ideals and aims in life that had already been thwarted and crushed, every heart in the room seemed to thrill with sympathy. As he dwelt upon his family and social relations, and eloquently referred to his mother and sweet-heart every eye it seemed in that large audience was wet with tears, not excepting the jury and the judge. He reminded the jury strongly that the evidence in the case was all circumstantial, and while admitting that the circumstantial evidence was strong, yet he asked, "Could not all the evidence given be true, and at the same time the defendant be innocent of the crime charged?" He concluded with:

“Herbert Brown is not guilty of the offense charged. Some heart as black as the doom of hell holds the secret that would set him free. That one may be here tonight,” he said, turning toward the audience. “Would God that his hellish secret might burn through his flesh and blaze out upon his breast here before this jury, that the guilty might be punished and the innocent go free. Gentlemen of the jury, the fate of the prisoner is in your hands; and not only the prisoner, but his family and friends as well. You have it in your power tonight to break the heart of his mother there,” continued the speaker, eloquently, pointing toward Herbert’s mother, weeping upon the arm of her husband. “You have the power tonight to blight forever the life of his sweet-heart yonder. Will you do it? You have the power tonight, gentlemen of the jury, to ruin forever the life, the prospects and the hopes of one of the noblest, most honorable and upright sons of the soil of this county. Will you do it? Time will unravel the mystery that shadows this case. Some day the damning secret will be uncovered. And then if you acquit the defendant today, you will again rejoice; and if you do not acquit him, you will go down to your graves with the burden of the lives your verdict has ruined and the souls it has made miserable, upon you. A verdict at your hands of ‘guilty’ will be re-

ceived by this audience and this county with a sickening silence, or a murmur of disapproval. A verdict of 'not guilty' will be received by an applause that will make this building tremble to its foundations, and the thanks and blessings of the law-abiding and justice-loving people of this entire community. I do not believe that twelve men can be found in this county that will find Herbert Brown guilty under the evidence in this case, and I shall expect at your hands a speedy verdict of *not guilty*."

As Mr. Mabry sat down the judge with difficulty prevented a demonstration from the audience.

Mr. Robb closed the argument with a ten minutes' speech that was full of logic and convincing power. The jury was instructed and sent to the jury-room, and court adjourned until eight o'clock next morning.

The great assembly broke up in almost wild confusion. All manner of speculation was engaged in. Some loudly predicted that Herbert Brown would be acquitted. Others as positively asserted that he would be found guilty, while the majority seemed to be of opinion it would result in a "hung jury."

Mr. Winnow and his wife and Theora left the building without more than speaking to a few friends, whom they chanced to meet as they crowded their way out.

"What do you think will be the decision of the jury?" askt Mrs. Winnow of her husband as soon as they were clear of the crowd.

"It's hard to tell. It will be either conviction or 'hung jury,' and I rather think it will be 'hung jury'."

"What is hung jury, papa?" askt Theora.

"That means a part are for conviction and a part for acquittal."

"Then you don't think Herbert will be cleared, papa?" askt Theora, manifestly alarmed.

"I don't look for it, Theora."

"Even if he should be cleared," said Mrs. Winnow, "the evidence shows that he is likely guilty, and there will always be a cloud over his life and prospects. Nearly everybody will always think he burned the church house."

Theora had never before thought of it in this light; but was laboring under the wrong impression that if the jury acquitted him that would forever settle the question. The little hope she had been nourishing vanisht, as she for the first time realized that there was no bright side to the jury's decision. She went to her room more miserable, if possible, that night than ever before. There were many sad hearts in Sandpre that night awaiting the verdict of the morrow.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A DYING DECLARATION.

"Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?"—
Ezek. 18:25.

"Doc, is there any chance fur me me to git well?"

"I'm afraid not much, Bill."

"How long've I got yet, Doc?"

"Don't know, Bill; why?"

"They's somethin' I've got ter tell, Doc."

The doctor turned and lookt his patient straight in the face. He wondered what secret Miller was going to reveal, for he knew his life of crime hid many.

"If it's of any importance, Bill, you'd better attend to it at once."

"Tain't uv much importance, Doc, but seems somehow I've got ter tell it."

"You may not be able to tell any secrets in an hour, Bill."

"That so?" said the patient, starting slightly. "Then I want you to send for the county attorney and Mabry, an' tell 'em ter bring an officer ter take my statemint. Do it quick, Doc."

Dr. Selquin started at the words of his patient. He felt sure some important evidence was to be revealed in the case now before the jury, tho he had not the slightest idea or suspicion how his patient might have come into possession of it, or what it was. Miller had had so much experience with the law during his lawless life that he was pretty well acquainted with its requirements. The doctor went down the flight of steps two at a time, and rusht into the hotel office.

"Mr. Tucker," he said, addressing the landlord, whom he found alone in the office—it being the breakfast hour, "send some one quick for Mr. Robb and some one else for Mr. Mabry and tell them to come quick to Miller's room. He's got something important to tell, and it may be too late in an hour. Tell Mr. Mabry to bring an officer to take his affidavit. Tell them to fly."

The doctor returned to watch carefully his patient, more on account of the evidence he possest, than any real interest in his life. The landlord went quickly to the dining-room door, and called two of his waiters to the office. They were given the message and bidden run with all their speed.

Mr. Mabry and the clerk of the district court were the first to arrive. Mr. Mabry,

who was past sixty years of age, was quite out of breath when he entered the room, but he felt that the interest of his client was at stake and had run nearly every step of the way. In a few minutes the county attorney entered. It was just half past seven o'clock. Miller was sleeping.

"Are you ready for me to wake him?" asked the doctor.

"Yes, wake him," said Mr. Mabry.

The doctor bent over him, and spoke his name in a low voice. The patient started and looked up with a dazed expression.

"Bill," said the doctor, "we're ready for your statement now."

The patient again closed his eyes. The doctor spoke louder, but did not awaken him. He seemed alarmed, as he turned quickly and poured out a little wine into a glass and poured it into the mouth of the patient. Miller opened his eyes again, and turned toward the visitors with a look of recognition.

"You said you wanted to make a statement, Bill," said the doctor.

"Yes," said Miller, "are you ready to take it down?"

"We are ready," answered Mr. Mabry. "What is it?"

"I'm the feller 'at burned the Presbyterian church."

Every one in the room, except the patient himself, started at this statement. Though all had expected evidence pertaining to that matter, yet no one had expected that statement. Mr. Mabry turned white, and his hands clencht nervously. Then quickly remembering himself, he askt:

"Do you know anything about a little red morocco photo-case with Herbert Brown's name on it?"

"Yes. Herbert Brown dropt that the day we had our fight, an' I foun' it the nex' mornin' between the walk an' the buildin' when I wus sweepin'; an' I laid it right in front uv the steps uv the church after I'd set it afire."

"Do you know anything about Nutt's testimony?"

"Yes; I promised 'im the drinks fur a year ter tell thet story 'bout his sow."

"Some one was heard on the walk at Mr. Brown's home before the fire. Do you know anything about that, Bill?" continued Mr. Mabry.

"Thet wus Jim."

"You mean Nutt?"

"Yes; he did thet so's they'd hev ter testify 'at they heerd it. Ef he'd a ben caught, he wus ter tell 'em he wus jes' huntin' fur his sow, an' the whol thing would uv fell through;

an' ef he wusn't caught, then I wus ter go ahead an' set the fire."

Mr. Mabry wrote rapidly for a minute or two. Then he read aloud what he had written.

"Is that right?" he askt the patient.

"Yes, thet's all right," replied Miller.

"Will that be satisfactory?" askt Mr. Mabry, turning to Mr. Robb.

"Yes," replied Mr. Robb, "and I assure you this is no more a pleasure to you than it is to me. I felt sure Herbert Brown was guilty. The scheme was well laid."

The witness was quickly sworn by the clerk of the court, and the others signed as witnesses.

"It's eight o'clock," said Mr. Robb, looking at his watch; "we shall have to hurry."

There chanced to be a hack standing just across the street. They called the driver, and all got in and drove rapidly to the courthouse. The roll of the jury had just been called, and in answer to the judge's question, the foreman had answered:

"We have not reacht a verdict."

The county attorney had paused in an adjacent room long enough to issue a warrant for the arrest of Nutt.

The judge was just in the act of returning

the jury to their room for further deliberation when the little group entered.

"If the court please," said Mr. Robb, "we desire to ask that the case of Herbert Brown, charged with arson, be reopened, as very important evidence has just been secured."

A few questions relating to the affidavit were asked by the judge, and the case was reopened. The clerk of the court read the dying statement of Miller. The intensity of feeling was apparent on the faces of the audience. The case was again submitted to the jury, without questions or argument by the counsel, and the jury retired.

The news of Miller's statement had been telephoned over town, and within ten minutes after the attorneys left the hotel all in any way interested in the case had been apprised of it, tho the exact statement was not known. The streets were alive with people pressing toward the court-house. Mr. Rule was one of the first to receive information of Miller's confession, and Mrs. Rule immediately rang for "Central" and called for Mr. Winnow's number.

"Hello!" came the response to her call.

"Hello! Is this Mr. Winnow's residence?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Is this Mrs. Winnow or Theora?"

"This is Mrs. Winnow."

"This is Mrs. Rule. Have you heard about Bill Miller's confession this morning?"

"Why, no," came the response, with eagerness.

"He has made a statement about burning the church house. Mr. Rule thinks he has confest doing it himself."

"You don't say so! When did he make the statement?"

"Just a little while ago, and the lawyers have taken it and gone to the court-house. We are all going as soon as we can get ready. Mr. Rule has already gone. I thought likely you would want to go."

"Why, yes; I think we will."

"That's all. Good-bye."

"Good-bye."

Theora could hardly believe for joy what her mother told her, and still feared there was something yet. In a few minutes they, with Mr. Winnow, were walking rapidly toward the court-house. They found the court-room packt to its full capacity, but at sight of Theora an opening was made through the crowd at the door for them to pass, and seats were vacated for them.

The jury were out barely two minutes. They filed in and took their seats. There was a breathless silence.

"Has the jury reacht a verdict?" askt the judge.

"It has," replied the foreman.

"What is your verdict?"

"We find the defendant, Herbert Brown, not guilty," replied the foreman in a strong, clear voice that reacht every ear in the crowded house.

A deafening roar of applause followed. Men tost their hats and caps into the air. Women wept for joy. Theora simply claspt her hands, and looking upward through her tears, said:

"Thank God!" and then dropping her head upon her father's shoulder, she prest her handkerchief to her eyes and wept.

As soon as order was restored by the loud rapping of the judge and the commanding orders of the constables, the jury was discharged and the prisoner declared free, and the court announced a short recess.

The judge, the jury, the attorneys and scores from the audience prest around Herbert to shake his hand. Herbert rose and stood erect with that same unchangeable expression on his face that he had borne through all the trial. Not a tear in his eyes, not a smile on his features in response to the hearty hand-shakes, the occasional embraces and the cordial words of congratulation from his many friends.

"Shall we go up and shake hands with Herbert, Theora?" askt Mr. Winnow, good-naturedly, lifting the head of his weeping daughter from his arm.

"No, papa, not now."

"O, I think we had better," replied her father, slipping her hand under his arm, and taking his wife's arm with his other hand.

A large number had past out, and the room was no longer crowded, tho many yet prest forward to shake hands with Herbert. Rev. Merlin was just in front of the little group.

"Mr. Brown, I wish to express to you my heartfelt joy at the happy termination of this trial," said Rev. Merlin, loud enough to be heard by all, at the same time extending his hand.

"I will take your word for it, Mr. Merlin, without your hand," replied Herbert, the slight curl on his lip marking the only change in his countenance.

The minister, coloring, stept backward, confused, embarrast, and lookt about him in a half simple, half angry manner. Those standing near stared in astonishment. Herbert stood unmoved.

"Herbert," said Mrs. Winnow, extending her hand, "we rejoice with your many other friends."

"Thank you," said Herbert, taking the offered hand.

"Herbert, we all rejoice at the termination of this trial," said Mr. Winnow, shaking hands. "Theora wants to congratulate you," he added, loosing her hand from his arm, and reaching it toward Herbert.

Theora had been battling ever since they started from their seats to control her feelings and to stop her tears. But she was at the mercy of a mingled sentiment of overwhelming joy at Herbert's proven innocence, and a feeling that she was guilty of a most cruel and unpardonable wrong against him.

As she felt him take her hand, she looked up for a moment through her tears into his face, and then again quickly dropt her eyes.

"Forgive me, Herbert," she said, sobbing.

Herbert held her hand for a moment. His lip trembled. The spell that had bound him through all those trying days was broken. The tears filled his eyes. He lifted the hand and bending toucht it to his lips, and a tear fell upon it as he let it drop from his hand. Even Mr. Winnow's eyes were filled with tears as they walkt away. Strong men who witness the pathetic little scene, as they saw Herbert for the first time give way to his feelings, wept.

Herbert and his father walkt home together in silence, for their sentiments and feelings were too strong for words. The news had already been carried to Mrs. Brown by kind, eager friends. As Herbert entered the room, his mother rose, smiling through her tears, and throwing her arms around his neck, first kist him, and then dropping her head upon his manly breast poured out her flood of joy in tears.

And we leave them thus, for what purer picture may we imprint upon the reader's heart?

CHAPTER XXIV.

CLOSING OF THE "JOINTS."

"Hate the evil, and love the good."—Amos 5:15.

"Praise the Lord," was the telegram received by Herbert Brown from Rev. Powers, in reply to a letter written by Mr. Rule informing him of the results of the trial.

Herbert remained at his home all the day after his discharge, talking with his mother, and other friends that called to see him, and writing a few letters in the afternoon.

Half a dozen times during the day Mrs. Brown was heard to exclaim, "O, how happy I am!" or "O, how thankful we ought to be!"

Mr. Brown reported business at the store much better than usual for Friday.

They had just finisht eating breakfast Saturday morning, when the telephone rang.

"Hello," said Herbert, placing the receiver to his ear.

"Hello! Is this you, Herbert?" came the reply.

"Yes, sir."

"This is Mr. Rule."

"Yes, I recognize your voice, Mr. Rule."

"Are you coming down to the store this morning?"

"Yes, sir."

"Can you stop at the bank? I should like to see you."

"At what time, Mr. Rule?"

"Well, most any time. Would half past eight suit you?"

"Yes, sir; I can stop then."

"All right. Thank you. Good-bye."

"Good-bye."

"I guess I shall not be needed at the store before nine. Shall I, father?"

"O no, there will be no rush before half past nine or ten. But I expect we shall have a pretty good day, judging from the business yesterday."

"Mr. Rule wants to see me, and I will stop a little while at the bank as I go down."

"I expect he wants to talk with you about getting Mr. Powers to hold a meeting here. I heard something of it yesterday."

"I most wish he would," said Mrs. Brown, "I believe he could do good. I have heard several speak favorably of his other address, and said they would go to hear him again should he speak here."

The day was bright, the air still and bracing, and the mercury in the thermometer was

gradually rising—so that a pleasant day was promised. Mr. Brown went to the store, and Herbert to his room to write a letter before going up town.

"Just come around to the fire, Herbert," said Mr. Rule, as Herbert walked into the First National Bank.

"How are you," continued Mr. Rule, extending his hand, for it was the first time they had met since the trial.

"I do not think I ever felt better," replied Herbert. "It makes one appreciate blessings to think he is about to lose them."

"We all realize that more than we ever did before, Herbert," replied Mr. Rule. "What I want to speak to you about is the church matter. As you probably know, we let everything pertaining to that drop when the Presbyterian church was burned, and have been awaiting results since. I talked with several yesterday, and all seem to be in favor of going right ahead now. What do you think about it?"

"I am decidedly in favor of it."

"What do you think of getting Rev. Powers to hold a revival right away?"

"I think that would be just the thing. How soon do you think of beginning it?"

"I think we can begin tonight. Court ad-

journals this afternoon, and the county commissioners have agreed to our using the courthouse as long as we want to hold meetings."

"Good!"

"Then I will just call Rev. Powers up by 'phone and see if he can come down on the afternoon train and begin the meetings tonight. We can have some window posters printed, and I am sure we shall have no trouble to get the word well circulated," said Mr. Rule, as he rang the telephone.

"Number," came the response from "Central."

"I want Rev. Oscar Powers, at Golden, as soon as you can get him, please."

"All right," answered "Central," and Mr. Rule hung up the receiver, and reseated himself.

"Herbert, you have had a very trying experience," said Mr. Rule, tho, in fact, he knew nothing of the most trying experience Herbert had gone through.

"Yes," replied Herbert, as he recalled the many dark hours, the periods of despondency and discouragement, and—that dark hour of despair; and his face turned white as he saw again the ghostly vision of himself in the mirror, with the glistening deadly weapon pointed at his temple. "And yet," he added, after

a moment's reflection, "I think it is worth all it has cost me."

Rin-n-n-ng, went the telephone.

"Hello!" said Mr. Rule, as he placed the receiver to his ear.

"Hello, Mr. Rule. Here's Rev. Powers, of Golden."

"All right," replied Mr. Rule, and he stood waiting.

"Hello!" presently came a clear, strong voice, speeding with almost the swiftness of thought over seventy-five miles of copper wire, and yet as distinct as though the speaker were in the same room.

"Hello! Is this Mr. Powers?" asked Mr. Rule.

"Yes, sir."

"This is Mr. Rule, at Sandpre."

"I recognize your voice, Mr. Rule."

"I have talked with several here, Mr. Powers, and we think now is the time to begin a meeting. Can you come?"

"How soon?"

"We can get ready to begin tonight, if that will suit you."

"I think I can come as well this afternoon as at any time. I shall have time to get ready and to arrange for my church services here during my absence, before train time. Go

ahead and make the arrangement. I shall try to be there."

"All right. I think you may expect a good congregation to greet you tonight. Good-bye."

"Good-bye."

Mr. Rule rang the telephone again before leaving.

"Give me number forty-six, please."

"Hello!" came the response.

"Hello! Is this the Journal office?"

"Yes, sir; what can I do for you?"

"This is Mr. Rule, and I want a few window posters printed right away. Can you do it?"

"Yes, sir."

"How long will it take you to get them out, Mr. White?"

"O, if there is not too much to set, about an hour."

"All right. Can you send some one to the bank for the manuscript?"

"Yes, sir. Is it ready?"

"It will be by the time he gets here. Good-bye."

"Good-bye."

Mr. Rule sat down at a table and wrote quickly:

"Rev. Oscar Powers, of Golden, will begin

revival meetings at the Court-house, 7:30 p. m., tonight (Saturday). Everybody invited."

"Have the other arrangements been made?" asked Herbert.

"Partially," replied Mr. Rule; "but we shall have everything in readiness in time, I think. The Jones Music Company has agreed to furnish a piano, and I shall make arrangements with the janitor of the court-house to attend the room during the meeting. Yes, I think we shall have everything in readiness, and a good congregation to start with."

"I wish we could get Jake interested," said Herbert, as he took his hat and walked out of the bank.

When Herbert reached the store he found quite a number already there, some to trade, and some to see and talk with him, or with his father about him and his trial. It was the busiest day the store had had for many Saturdays, and the day passed quickly.

As soon as the posters announcing the meeting were in the windows of the business houses, the conversation of the street turned from Herbert to the meeting; or rather, to the two associated, for there was a feeling in all minds that the two were closely related, and this served an excellent purpose in advertising the meeting.

The six o'clock train, on which Rev. Powers was expected, was reported first an hour, then an hour and a half, and finally two hours late. At half past seven o'clock the court room was fairly well filled, which, considering the size of the room and the shortness of the notice, showed extraordinary interest. At eight o'clock the audience had become somewhat restless. Herbert had gone to the depot to meet Rev. Powers. Mr. Rule stepped over to where Rev. Bailey, the old minister, was sitting.

"Rev. Bailey, will you come forward and take charge of the meeting until Rev. Powers arrives? I think the train will be in shortly."

"Yes," replied the minister, following Mr. Rule to the front.

Just then the long, loud whistle of the passenger train was heard, and there was a stir and a murmur through the audience. The depot was only two blocks from the court-house, and the audience had barely finished the first song, when Herbert, followed by Rev. Powers, entered the room. Some one started a cheer, and the whole audience broke out in hearty hand-clapping. Rev. Powers bowed, and after a few words with the Baptist minister, stepped forward, with his open Bible in

his hand, and read a passage of Scripture, after which Rev. Bailey led in prayer.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the minister, as soon as the audience was seated after the prayer, "as I walkt up the street of your town this evening, I saw what is a disgrace to any Christian community in this state. I past two saloons running in open violation of the laws. They were crowded with young men and boys that ought to be here. They are damning the souls of your boys, your brothers and your husbands. They are blighting the hopes of your daughters and destroying the happiness of your homes. I do not propose to hold a meeting in this town with those hell-traps open. They must be closed. I will appoint as a committee to call upon the proprietors of those 'joints' after this meeting closes, and to demand of them that they close their doors, both front and back, and keep them closed, Mr. Rule, Mr. Hudson and Mr. Herbert Brown. As to whether they shall open after the meeting has closed, we shall consider that matter later. Let those in this audience that approve of this committee say *amen*."

There was a strong response all over the room. While this was an entire surprise to every one, not excepting even the committee

itself, yet the manner in which it was done had inspired confidence; and scarcely one present doubted that the saloons, which had been running on the plea that **they** could not be closed, would be closed.

"The two greatest evils of this day and generation," continued the speaker, "the twin monsters of iniquity, are sectarianism, or religious schism, and intemperance. The one binds the strong man of the house while the other spoils his goods."

The minister spoke forcefully and eloquently for half an hour, and then announcing the next meeting, dismissed the audience.

There were but two "joints" then running, as Miller's place had been closed since his death, awaiting the inquiry of the officials as to whether he had living heirs. The committee, after a brief conversation with the minister, left the court-house and went directly to the nearest "joint." When they entered the place, it was apparent that parties from the meeting had preceded them, and that they were expected. Mr. Rule stepped quietly up to the proprietor, the small one-eyed man, mentioned in a previous chapter, and said in a low but decided tone:

"We are a committee appointed to call upon you and ask that your place of business here

be closed up and kept absolutely closed during the meetings now in progress at the court-house."

"Just uv evenin's while the meetin's hold, do you mean?" askt the proprietor, rather uneasily.

"No, Mr. Hensen, we mean that you lock up your building tonight, and that you do not open a door or window day or night until this meeting has closed," replied Mr. Rule, with a business precision that was convincing.

"And then you'll not bother us after the meetin' is closed?" askt Hensen, inquisitively.

"We have nothing to say as to that at present," replied Mr. Rule, with a curtness that indicated a disinclination toward further discussion.

"Well, I reckon we'll have to try to do what we can to help the meetin' along," replied the other, with a grin toward the crowd in the saloon.

"Then may we depend upon your shutting up this place and keeping it closed until the meeting ends?"

"Yes, sir. You can sure depend upon it."

"Thank you," said Mr. Rule. "We shall be glad to have you all attend the meetings. There will be preaching at the court-house tomorrow at eleven and tomorrow evening."

The other "joint" was only half a block away. Several followed the committee from Hensen's place to see "the performance," as they termed it, at Smith's "joint."

"Will you do the talking at the next?" asked Mr. Rule, addressing Mr. Hudson.

"O, no; I do not think it advisable to depose a victorious officer right in the presence of another engagement. You go ahead. Herbert and I prefer the position of 'The man behind the gun,' " and they all laughed at Mr. Hudson's humor.

They found Smith's place as well filled as was the other.

"We have come as a committee, Mr. Smith," said Mr. Rule, "to request that you close up your 'joint' here until the meetings now in progress at the court-house are closed."

"W'at right 'av ye got ter be a tellin' me w'at I've got ter do er w'at I've not got ter do? I don't interfere with yore bis'ness," replied Smith, half complainingly, half savagely.

Smith was a man of rather more than ordinary height, raw-boned, and a face that was anything but prepossessing. He was very ignorant, as his language indicates; and, in fact, had spent a number of years of his shiftless life as an ordinary tramp.

"We want your answer, Mr. Smith," said Mr. Rule, firmly, and with a little emphasis. "We demand of you that you close up this place tonight and that you keep it closed day and night until the meetings have ended, at least. Will you do it?"

"No, by G—d, I won't. I'm not a botherin' yer d——d meetin', an' it hain't got no bis'ness a botherin' me."

"I think it is simply a matter of choice between closing and being closed," said Herbert, "and I should guess the easiest thing would be to close."

"I've got the council a backin' me, an' I guess, by G—d, they'll 'ave somethin' ter say w'en ye go ter close me up."

"The city council cannot do anything for you, even if they wanted to," said Mr. Rule, "and the wise thing for you to do is to close up this place tonight and keep it closed. You are pretty sure to get into trouble if it is open again while the meeting is in progress. You are all invited to attend the meetings at the court-house tomorrow morning and tomorrow evening," added Mr. Rule, as the committee left the room.

"What if he doesn't close," askt Mr. Hudson, as the three walkt away.

"I judge from the tone of Mr. Powers' re-

marks that he will insist upon its being closed," replied Mr. Rule.

"He's right, too," said Mr. Hudson; "I could not help feeling guilty myself while he was talking tonight, when I remembered that I had never done a thing toward closing up those places. This whole trouble of Herbert's and Jake Adams' and the burning of the church has come directly out of those 'joints.' "

"Yes," replied Mr. Rule, "I realize that we have not done our duty, and am heartily in favor of closing the 'joints' in this town, and keeping them closed."

"If those 'joints', or either of them, are open Monday morning," said Herbert, "I am in favor of arresting the proprietors at once. There is certainly abundance of evidence, and if the officers will do their duty they can get all the evidence they need right in the 'joints' when they seize the goods."

"Do they have any saloons at Golden?" asked Mr. Hudson, addressing Herbert.

"No, sir; not a 'joint' in the town. Rev. Powers told me they had a long, hard fight there. They had five saloons running there almost night and day. After they had organized the new church, they determined to close them, and tho the officers and the

council were against them, and the churches indifferent, they succeeded after a long, hard fight in the courts, and no one thinks of opening up such a business there any more."

"I think it's our own cowardice more than anything else, that's to blame for their running here," said Mr. Hudson.

"I do not know but that you are right," said Mr. Rule, as they reached the corner where their several ways parted.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE REVIVAL.

"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."—Rom. 12:9.

All the churches, except the Baptist, held their regular services on the following Sunday, and yet there was a good congregation at the morning service at the court-house, and in the evening not all could be seated. A large number from each of the churches were present in spite of their own churches, holding services.

At the evening service the minister closed his discourse with:

"No church has authority either to receive or to dismiss members. This is too sacred an office to be entrusted to erring, self-righteous man, and is therefore one of the things God has reserved unto Himself. But like our first parents, man is not satisfied until he has eaten of the 'forbidden fruit,' and so men have robbed God of this authority, and have assumed to themselves the arrogant office of receiving into the church on man-made tests of fellowship that are not tests of Christian

character. Against this unwarranted and insolent authority of men, we stand opposed, holding the Bible and the Bible only as our faith, and granting to each his God-given right to interpret it for himself. How many in this audience tonight are willing to stand on this platform, offering to all Christ's followers full fellowship, regardless of honest differences of opinion on doctrinal points. I want to ask all that are willing to do this to rise to your feet, and to remain standing for a moment."

People in all parts of the house began to rise. Some forty or more from the Baptist church stood. Mr. Rule's entire family, Mr. Winnow's family, Mr. Hudson and his wife, Herbert and several others, including a few from each of the other churches, rose. Mr. Brown turned and spoke to his wife sitting at his side. She nodded, and they, too, rose.

"Are there not others that are willing to stand on the platform God has given in preference to platforms made, or at least arranged, by man?" asked the minister.

A few more rose. There were nearly an hundred standing.

"I desire those standing, and as many more as may desire, to meet here in this room tomorrow afternoon at two o'clock to make per-

manent arrangements," and pronouncing the benediction, he dismissed the audience.

"The new preacher" and "the new doctrines" were everywhere in Sandpre the chief topics of conversation. His radical position against the "joints" had awakened much interest and discussion. All were wondering whether the "joints" would be closed Monday, and if not, what would be done. But when Monday morning arrived, the doors of both saloons were locked and the windows closely curtained, and there was no response to the loud knocking of a few regular customers who went early for their morning drams.

The meeting Monday afternoon was attended by about one hundred and fifty persons, and a church was organized with ninety-two members.

The attendance at the court-house continued large, and it seemed that each night the eloquence and earnestness of the speaker increased, and his statements and doctrines became more startling. Members of the "orthodox" churches, who at first, through prejudice stayed away, now through curiosity to hear and to see the man so much talked of everywhere, were crowding their way into the court-room night after night. Even many of the roughs and toughs of the town, who before

spent their evenings at the saloons, attended the meetings. Every evening there were conversions or additions to the new church. A number from the other denominations united with the new organization. Some of the most noted and hopeless characters in the town made profession of religion. Uncle Tim Griggs was present the first night of the meeting, and had not mist a night since. Jake Adams was there at the first Sunday evening's service, and had attended irregularly since.

On Saturday evening, just two weeks after the meeting had begun, Rev. Powers was conducting a short praise service. The meeting was enthusiastic. The new converts were eager to testify to their faith, and others were fully as eager to take part in the meeting. Half a dozen or more were on the floor at once awaiting their opportunity to speak, when the minister, raising his hand, pointed toward the rear of the room, and said, "Mr. Griggs, next." The instant the watchful eye of the minister saw the old man rise up, tho several were already on the floor waiting, he gave him opportunity to speak. The whole audience started and turned in the direction the minister was pointing. For "Uncle Tim" to speak in church was a thing never head of.

"I hain't never made no pertenshuns ter religion, an' I hain't never took no stock in the churches. I tried once w'en I wus a young man ter make a start, but some tol' me one thin' an' some another, jes' like they did Jake thar," pointing toward Jake Adams, who was sitting near him, "when he tried ter be a Christin las' fall. I couldn't read fur myse'f an' so I jes' give it up, an' I've never felt like I wanted ter be a Christin since till this meetin'. But I've made up my min' durin' this meetin' ter try ter be a Christin the res' uv my days. Jes' sixty-two years ago las' night my mother died," continued the old man, choking for a moment. "I wus only four years ol', but I remember it as well's tho it wus only las' night. She put her arms roun' me an' kist me, tho I didn't understan' it then. She wus a Christin, an' I think she mus' be in heaven now," said the old frontiersman, the tears flowing down his cheeks. "I had eight brothers an' sisters older'n me, an' one younger. They're all gone now, an' I don' expect ter be here much longer. I thank God fur this meetin'."

As the old man sat down, "Amens" and "Praise-the-Lords" were heard all over the room. His simple, earnest story, combined with his well known honesty and uprightness of character had toucht every heart there.

At the close of the meeting that evening, when the invitation was given, "Uncle Tim" was among the number that came forward and united with the church. Jake Adams stood with downcast face, but refused to go forward, though one or two went to him and tried to persuade him.

The Sunday evening following was the last meeting of the series. The room was packed to overflowing. The minister preached a strong and eloquent sermon, and closed with a very earnest invitation. Several came forward. Herbert Brown's eyes were turned toward Jake Adams, who was standing with downcast eyes in the back of the room. Herbert remembered the dying request of Jake's mother, and his promise to her. He remembered, too, her delirious prayers for her only boy. He felt that Jake's happiness, success, and future eternal salvation depended upon this moment's decision. One or two stepped over and spoke to Jake, and Herbert saw him shake his head, and they turned away. The choir had reached the last verse and began to sing, "O, why do you wait, dear brother, etc." Herbert's eyes filled with tears. He could wait no longer, but walked back to where Jake was standing, and laying his hand on his shoulder, said:

"Jake, don't you want to be a Christian?"

"Yes; but I can't," replied Jake, brokenly.

"It won't be so hard this time, Jake. You won't object to the creed of this church, will you?"

"O no, Herbert; but I am so wicked. I can't live a Christian."

"But we'll help you, Jake. There shall never again be any saloons in this town to tempt you. Remember, Jake, your mother died praying for you."

"O, my poor mother!" said Jake, his form shaking with his sobs.

"Come, Jake," and Herbert led the way to the front.

Jake followed with bowed head, the tears flowing down his cheeks, and knelt at the platform, weeping aloud. Sobs were heard all over the room.

"Let us kneel in prayer," said the minister.

At the close of the prayer, Jake Adams rose, shouting,—

"Praise the Lord! I'm saved!"

The enthusiasm was great. Women shouted and wept, and men shed tears.

The meeting had been a success. There were now over two hundred members of the new church. The minister closed the meetings with the following words,—

“The twin evils of this day are intemperance and religious schism. Let this church stand as an enemy, a vital enemy, a mortal enemy, against them both. Let it never refuse fellowship, full church fellowship, to any and every child of God. Let the Bible with a free individual interpretation of its doctrines be our creed, and not man-made confessions, codes, or articles of religion. Let Christian character, and not doctrinal opinions, be our only test of fellowship. Let us never again blur the pure, holy pages of the Word of God with the blackening ink of the ‘doctrines of men.’ Let us cease to hide from the world the pure and perfect face of the Son of God by the veil of priesthood.”

CHAPTER XXVI.

A PRESENT GLIMPSE OF SANDPRE.

"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God."—Rom. 8:28.

Half a dozen years have passed since the period covered by as many months recorded in this book. Should the reader drive through the beautiful, wide, clean streets of Sandpre today, he will pass not a "joint" or saloon. Over the door of the place where "Bill" Miller kept his "joint" he reads, "Hudson & Co., Hardware." Jake Adams frequents the place even more regularly now than he did then, for he is a trusted employe. But he spends his evenings with his wife at the little cottage, now hardly recognizable on account of its improvements, where he and his devoted mother lived so long. If we drive down the main street a block from the business center of the town, and then turn half a block west, we are in front of the magnificent "Union Chapel," now the largest church, both in size of house and in size of congregation, in the town. Half a block farther, and we are in front of a neat,

cozy cottage, with flowers and shrubs growing profusely in the front yard.

"Hello, little man, what's your name?" we say to a three or four year old boy playing in the yard, as we draw rein in front of the cottage.

"Oscar Powers Brown," comes the clear, distinct, childish voice, as he turns toward us a face, beaming with childish vigor and mischief,—a face in which we see clearly intermingled the beauty of Theora Winnow and the manliness of Herbert Brown. May he combine with that beauty of feature and manliness of character the power and courage of conviction of the young minister whose name he bears.

THE END.



"OSCAR POWERS BROWN."

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